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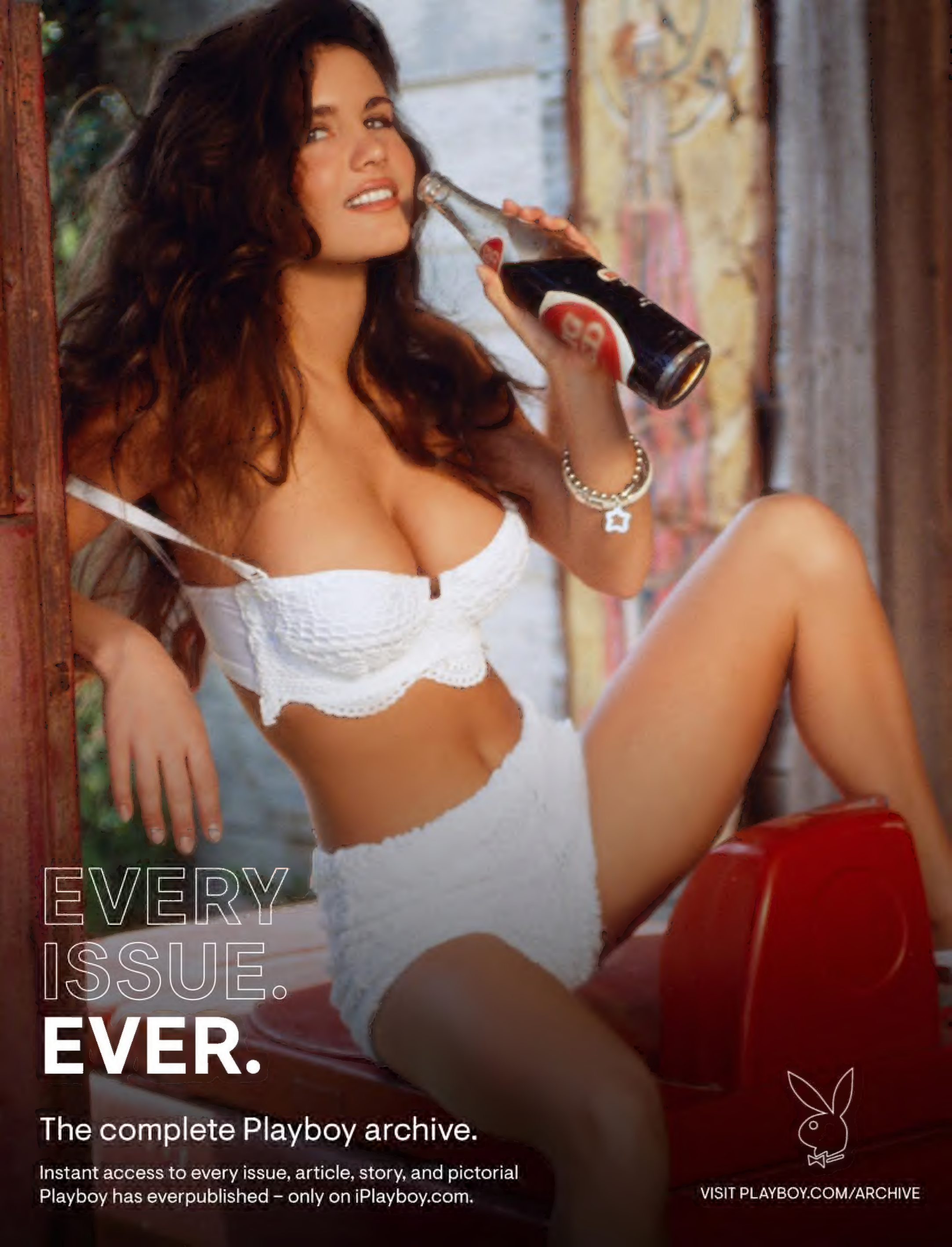
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WEED WARRIOR: Cannabis Knows Best

In the first installment of a series of columns on his deep relationship with cannabis, our writer shares his origin story as a pot prophet—someone who lives in service to the leafy green goodness, from smuggling to smoking to selling

BY **ANDREW DEANGELO** ILLUSTRATIONS **ROB STITES**

For the better part of four decades, my life has revolved around cannabis. I have sold, grown, smuggled, transported and hidden it. I have pushed to make it legal. I have opened a cannabis retail shop. I have become an evangelical priest and political operative for the cannabis plant.

I estimate that I have touched more than a billion dollars' worth of cannabis over my career. Thousands of pounds of weed have passed through my hands. Tens of thousands of people have enjoyed and been healed by the cannabis I've traded. I say this not to inflate my sense of value or ego, but to illustrate just how much smarter cannabis is than I am.

I first encountered cannabis in high school when I was 15 years old, and it's been a daily part of my life ever since. I'm 52 now, and I have served this plant for 37 years, helping it propagate all over the world. I've put my life and freedom at risk to spread cannabis far and wide. My entire value system is built around the lessons I learned while under the influence of the intoxicating allure of cannabis.

Engaging my endocannabinoid system daily with external cannabinoids has made me a softer and wiser person, one who understands that I'm just a small part of the web of life. And I have come to revere the life force that makes the sun burn and our hearts beat—the life force that embodies both the cannabis plant and the sentient being known as myself. We've been together a long time now. You might say we are the best of friends.

I knew it would be this way during that first smoke way back in 1984. A serious sports injury had just crushed my dreams of becoming a professional athlete, and I sat, depressed, in my mom's kitchen. My older brother handed me a joint. "It'll make you feel better," he said. I had resisted similar overtures in the past, but a little voice deep inside told me to hit that joint. And when the joint hit me back, the transformative effects that cannabis has on many people happened to me instantaneously. My sadness lifted, and I began to see that there was more to life than playing sports. Suddenly I had a new ally—this plant that I could turn to for strength, wisdom and inspiration.

This realization was incredibly liberating for me as a young man trying to find his place in the world. I knew I had to keep being with this plant and had to help others do the same. And at the age of 15, that's about all I knew—that and the fact that change is the only constant. I was just learning how to be in the world, but somehow I knew that I had to sell weed. What happened to me needed to happen to everybody. The plant was so wise. If I could just get it into the hands of more people, the rest of the work would be done by Mama Ganja. The world would become a more compassionate place by default.

What I didn't know was just how hard it would be to break cannabis prohibition and erase the stigma that goes with it. I had figured it would be easy because even at 15 years old, I saw the absurdity of cannabis prohibition. But I had no way of knowing or understanding the kind of sacrifice needed to do something as monumental as getting the U.S. to legalize weed. I didn't know my quest would cost me relationships I cared about but could not sustain as I worked underground, as well as careers and other aspirations that were closed to me, out of reach due to my cannabis advocacy during a time when the war on drugs was all the rage. I didn't know that I would be busted and locked up, which happened to many family members and friends of mine as well.

Cannabis is in the driver's seat: We are merely passengers on a journey to somewhere better.

Those things caused me a lot of personal pain by subjecting me to rejection and ostracization for no good reason. I was in a constant state of doubt about my life and choices. And through it all, cannabis provided comfort, relief and reassurance that I was on the right path—even if it was very dark, sometimes, with no end in sight. The cannabis community that I helped foster underground, and later above ground, has always been the source of healing and opportunity for me. All these brothers and sisters have been touched by cannabis the same way I've been. Together, we all have a similar understanding that cannabis is in the driver's seat: We are merely passengers on a journey to somewhere better.

Our role is to end cannabis prohibition, free the plant and create a global hemp economy. The plant will take it from there because the plant got us this far. Cannabis will soon be cultivated everywhere on earth. It is a plant that has bloomed inside human physiology and integrated itself in our DNA; a plant that can be food, fiber, fuel and medicine; a plant that has captured the imagination of science, art, music and pop culture. It is a plant that has a wisdom far beyond our own.

I am grateful to be in service of cannabis because cannabis is smarter than I am. Mama Ganja knows where she's going. I just have to help her get there.

The King of Chaos

FACES THE END OF HIS REIGN

The president is scared out of his pancake makeup he's going to lose the election

BY BRIAN KAREM

There is nothing like the muggy summer heat of Washington, D.C.

The closer it gets to Independence Day, the more oppressive the heat becomes. The humidity, along with the susurrus of cicadas and the now-diminished sounds of traffic and protests, closes in on you like the trash compactor in Star Wars.

True, boarded-up businesses are slowly reopening. A few more people are out and about, but it still feels as if you might turn the corner and find Will Smith's character from I Am Legend.

I decided to walk near Lafayette Square, where the government has been quick to clean up the scorched buildings and broken glass from recent protests, because I'd been asked to meet with an administration official I hadn't seen in person since March—before the dark times. Before the Empire.

We grabbed a coffee at a newly reopened Starbucks near the White House and walked with our masks on for several blocks as we talked.

"It's as if he wants to lose," I was told about President Trump.

I nodded. "Well, you get no arguments from me," I said.

"I'm serious. It's been downhill since Tulsa. The polls don't look good. The Russian story… "

"Which one? Bounty Gate?"

"Yes. I don't think he wants to run again."

During the past three years, I've heard the same thing, several times, from several sources inside the White House. I've been told Trump is delusional, out of touch, lazy. This always leads to another round of questions—and one question in particular.

"Why are you still there?" I often ask this of those I know who work at the White House—especially those who otherwise seem to display good sense. There are many more of those people than you'd think, but I've never received a satisfying answer to my question. I think there are a variety of reasons, and any one of them may apply at any particular moment.

But the mood in the White House these days is growing more and more grim. The coronavirus pandemic is getting worse. Protests continue. The economy is still in the toilet, and Trump's handpicked Supreme Court ruled against him. He trails in the polls. And there's Bounty Gate: It appears Russia paid Taliban-linked bounty hunters to kill American military personnel in Afghanistan.

When The New York Times broke the story, it threw many at the White House into a tailspin. Trump denied it and his press secretary demanded The New York Times return its Pulitzer prizes.

"The White House response is telling as they are attacking the leaks and claiming that the American people finding out about this is the real problem," wrote Democratic activist Adam Parkhomenko in his newsletter, Today's Big Stuff. "But real people who lost people in Afghanistan have questions."

On Sunday evening Trump tweeted about the bounty allegations, "Intel just reported to me that they did not find this info credible, and therefore did not report it to me or @VP. Possibly another fabricated Russia Hoax, maybe the Fake News @nytimesbooks, wanting to make Republicans look bad!!!"

So Trump was briefed, according to him, by his intelligence team, who said the information was not credible.

But on Monday, White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said, "There was not a consensus among the intelligence community, and in fact there were dissenting opinions…and it would not be elevated to the president until it was verified."

So about half a day after Trump said he'd been briefed on the Russia bounties and the intel community confirmed the information wasn't credible, McEnany told the world the president hadn't been briefed, because there was not a consensus among the intelligence community.

Was either true?

"I wouldn't believe anything coming out of this White House," my senior-level White House source told me between sips of latte.

But the White House settled on saying Trump wasn't briefed, and they were sticking with it despite the President's tweet. Tuesday afternoon, in a hastily called briefing (reporters were given less than an hour notice), McEnany once again defended the president. She also said he was the "most informed person on the planet when it comes to the threats we face." He didn't know about the bounty and McEnany apparently indicated Trump didn't read his intelligence reports. "The president does read," she said as a means to defend him.

I've never before seen a hastily called White House briefing to inform the world the president reads. We break new ground every day with Donald Trump.

Trump wants to change the subject and let you know he's going after vandals. He's so proud to do so, on Saturday he tweeted several "Wanted" posters featuring those who may have participated in defacing statues. Apparently Trump is now lobbying to be John Walsh on America's Most Wanted.

So naturally my question, posed to the White House press staff, was: You signed an Executive Order to protect statues from vandals. How do you plan to protect living American military personnel from bounty hunters?

The White House wouldn't or couldn't answer.

All of this leads to the obvious: Trump is scared out of his pancake makeup he's going to lose the election in the fall. I know this because I'm still on mailing lists for both Biden and Trump. The president sends out as many emails in a day begging for money as Biden sends out in a week

"I WOULDN'T BELIEVE ANY-THING COMING OUT OF THIS WHITE HOUSE," MY SENIOR-LEVEL WHITE HOUSE SOURCE TOLD ME.

One of the latest came from Sarah Huckabee Sanders. "We need you to pick up the pace, Brian," she scolded me in her email, sent to potential contributors. "I'm going to call the Trump Online Fundraising Team at 9 P.M. tonight to get an update on who has donated so I can report back to President Trump. I'll have no choice but to tell him the truth, so make sure you contribute NOW before it's too late."

The idea of Sanders telling anyone the truth is laughable, but so is using Sanders to intimidate people into contributing money to the president's re-election campaign.

As for the president himself, he's so desperate he sent me another email on Tuesday. "Brian," it said. "I emailed you. The Vice President emailed you. My sons, Don Jr. and Eric, both emailed you. My campaign manager, Brad, emailed you. Lara emailed you. Newt Gingrich emailed you. Sarah Huckabee Sanders emailed you. Trump Finance emailed you. And now I'm emailing you. Again. Each day, my team has given me a list of Patriots who have stepped up to help us reach our critical End-of-Quarter Goal, and each day, I've noticed YOUR NAME is STILL MISSING "

Trump's desperation is palpable, and it appears his staff can no longer take it.

When I first began meeting with Trump officials for background chats, we met at diners or restaurants far outside of the district where they needn't fear being seen with me. Now we walk up and down the sidewalk within blocks of the White House. The coronavirus isn't the only reason, and the Starbucks coffee isn't that great. The president is losing his power even over his own people.

If Barack Obama had been accused of turning a blind eye to Russia as that country paid bounty hunters to kill American soldiers, the Wilhelm screams across the Potomac would be undeniable and unstoppable. Some of the White House staff now fully understands the depths of Trump's dishonesty, and they are screaming.

The president is in free fall. It is beginning to look like his re-election will fail. There is talk he may not run. There is concern from inside his own camp that he is delusional. This president is the king of chaos, but the chaos is now threatening to swallow him and anyone who is even peripherally attached to him.

And there was even more bad news for Trump on Tuesday. Dr. Anthony Fauci warned the country when he testified before a Senate committee that we may see 100,000 new coronavirus cases a day. "We can't just focus on the areas that are having the surge," he said "It would put the entire country at risk."

"I'm very concerned because it could get very bad."

Senator Rand Paul scolded Fauci for not being optimistic enough; Trump simply ignored him.

Other than tweeting "THE LONE WARRIOR," Trump remained relatively silent, isolated and afraid.

As my favorite administration official, who likes to talk on background, walked back to the White House, I could see in the eyes above the mask how very concerned, lonely and vulnerable this person is. But that's the whole country right now.

The United States has faced overwhelming problems before Look no further into the past than 1968: the Vietnam war. Racism. Body bags. Assassinations. Riots. Protests. It was all there. The music was better.

But back then the country had an underlying sense of self-confidence lacking in America today. As recently as Bill Clinton's first inauguration, we had a president who said, "There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured by what is right with America. And so today, we pledge an end to the era of deadlock and drift a new season of American renewal has begun."

Today we have Donald Trump—and even members of his staff are now facing the fact that for the good of the country, he must go.

IF BARACK OBAMA HAD BEEN ACCUSED OF TURNING A BLIND EYE TO RUSSIA AS THAT COUNTRY PAID BOUNTY HUNTERS TO KILL AMERICAN SOLDIERS, THE WILHELM SCREAMS ACROSS THE POTOMAC WOULD BE UNSTOPPABLE.

Michelle

YEE

Model @IHRTMICHELLEYEE

Photography by JUAN SANCHEZ | @GETLITWITHJUA

Instead of stopping and saying
this is good enough I make more
and more goals every year

It's such an honor to have you feature! Were you excited to shoot for Playboy? So excited, I think when I found out I was going to be in Playboy I was crying and laughing at the same time - what a dream come true.

2020 was quite the year for us all, what are some of your most memorable highlights of the year? I started a mommy empowerment clothing line @mymilfgear on Instagram. My kids and I sold tons of our handmade bears, BuyMomFlowers (buymomflowers.com), I started my new venture in life and I'm planning so many concept shoots I cannot wait for 2021!

What are your resolutions for this year? Bringing more and more content for my followers and fans, and most definitely get to traveling as soon as possible!

What exciting plans do you have for this year? Starting my new venture, writing out more goals, getting a new car, going back to the gym, continuing to bring out more content and staying happy and healthy.

Tell us something surprising about you? I'm a mother of two kids! They are my pride and joy and the reason that my goal list is never going to end. Instead of stopping and saying "this is good enough" I make more and more goals every year.

Describe to us your perfect date. First, they have to smell good, have a wonderful smile, understand my dry humor, laugh at my jokes, and tell me jokes back, eating amazing food, drinking good wine (or tequila depends on where we are), and losing track of time because the conversation is so amazing.

What is the funniest pickup line you have ever gotten? Did your dad steal the stars out the sky and put them in your eyes?

What is your guilty pleasure? Sour candy and cake - not at the same time of course. I'm a huge sucker for sour candy, I would have it every day if I could. Just sit there and eat a bag of it. Cake... oh a good cake makes my mouth drool.

What would you consider to be your biggest challenge as a model so far? Being secure with myself, and knowing that I am beautiful, wonderful and awesome. There are so many beautiful women around the world and now accessible on the internet via social media and you have to be secure in yourself to know that you are amongst the beautiful women of the world. It took years to understand that I was one of those women, and I proudly accept that. No matter what anyone says I know I'm beautiful and look at me, I'm in Playboy!

Any last words you would like to share with the readers? Thank you so much for admiring my photos and I hope you continue to see my growth and like my content! Don't forget to follow me on social media @ihrtmichelleyee or visit my site iheartmichelleyee.com. Thank you!

Follow Michelle's adventures on Instagram @ihrtmichelleyee for all her latest news and story updates!

20

HALSEY

With Hopeless Fountain Kingdom, the queen of New Americana is more outspoken than ever. Here, she talks about donating $100,000 to Planned Parenthood and the virtues of the dad bod

INTERVIEW BY **REBECCA HAITHCOAT**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **RAMONA ROSALES**

Q1: Hopeless Fountain Kingdom hit number one on the Billboard 200. You're the first woman to top that chart in 2017. How does it feel?

HALSEY: A lot of this accolade shit is super arbitrary: "Halsey is the first girl with blue hair from New Jersey to…." It's exciting but also enraging, because I know a lot of women who put out better albums than me who deserve massive accolades, and I'm the one who had to break the seal.

Q2: Badlands, your 2015 debut studio album, made you a pop star. In less than a year you went from playing 400-capacity clubs to selling out Madison Square Garden. Then, last year, the Chainsmokers' "Closer" blasted you to a whole new level. Has your ascent been as dizzying as it looks from here?

HALSEY: I got successful so quickly. I blinked, and a couple months later I was performing on national television. There was zero time to get adjusted. I was considered relevant and important enough to accept awards and perform, but some people were like, "Who the fuck is that?" It's weird: The further I slip into the mainstream, I also maintain this kind of cult personality. And it's weird to me that I've tried so hard to be transparent, and then after "Closer" it dawned on me that many people know only that about me.

Q3: Do you ever feel you're underestimated?

HALSEY: I feel like I have been, yeah. After "Closer" — which is an absolutely great pop record, and I mean no disrespect to the guys— it was really hard for me and my fans. People were like, "Oh, the 'backseat of your Rover' girl." My fans were like, "No, the girl I've loved for three years and sings about mental health and self-love." Also, I write every song. I have co-writing credits, but most of the time it's a co-write from a melodic perspective. Make no mistake: The poetry is mine. I executiveproduced this album and direct my videos, so to go from that to "Rover girl," no.

Q4: How is the new album different from Badlands?

HALSEY: I needed this album. I described Badlands as an angry female album. But I'm not angry anymore. I just feel catharsis. Calm. Hopeless Fountain Kingdom was about me trying to figure out who I am again. I'm smiling and happy. I stopped biting my nails. I have these long, beautiful nails I grew out because I'm not anxious anymore. Now I feel just…good. Until the next thing comes along that fucks me up so I can write the third album.

Q5: You've become known as a pop star with an unusually close connection to your fans. Does that generosity make it hard for you to maintain romantic relationships?

HALSEY: I learned a while ago to keep that part separate. I've dated people no one knows about. I've managed to keep them to myself, going through a breakup and not having it be on the fucking internet. I'm always in a position of dominance in my relationships, and a lot of people have had a hard time dealing with that. I think because I'm so dominant in my main life, in my intimate life I want to be in a position of submission. I want to be taken care of since I'm taking care of everybody else all the time. But I'm a fucking 22-year-old female CEO of a company; I can't do all that all day and then come home to some person and be like, "Okay, now treat me like I'm a delicate little flower."

Q6: How do newer fans respond to you?

HALSEY: I love watching people change their mentality. I love watching frat bros tweet me things like "You're the hottest woman. You're my celebrity crush." And I'm judging them back, like "You are not a dude I'd think would find me hot. By any means." Whatever it is about me—my music, the way I speak or whatever led you to be accepting and interested in me—that's really cool.

Q7: You seem to have a pretty laissez-faire attitude about your appearance. Does that extend to your body image?

HALSEY: I always had an 18-year-old's tight body. I could just eat whatever the fuck I wanted to and have abs, and my butt was always firm and round. Then recently I was changing and looked in the mirror and was like, "Oh my God — it's been three months since I've been on tour! My body is changing. I need to put in work now." I went down this psychological rabbit hole, and now I'm telling myself that I need to change how my body is changing naturally.

Q8: Would you ever get cosmetic surgery?

HALSEY: I try never to do anything permanent. And it's not because I have qualms about plastic surgery; it's because I have qualms about my own indecisiveness. I don't want to make surgical decisions and in 10 years be like, "Ah, small lips are very in fashion now." Can you believe

"I still have white boys asking me why my nipples are brown."

that around 10 years ago all the women's beauty magazines were writing articles about how to make your butt look smaller? Now it's "How to Make Your Butt Look As Big As You Fucking Can."

Q9: Do you think beauty ideals are becoming more inclusive?

HALSEY: I think we've finally reached the point where we're so oversaturated with sexuality and so much is considered "ideal" that we're in a position where we can change everything. I watch my own perspective changing. I was talking to a guy, flirting with him by a pool, and he took off his shirt. He wasn't a muscular dude, but he wasn't skinny; he was kind of chubby. I just remember being like, "He looks so happy and confident, and I love the way he looks." This isn't a self-applauding thing. Hopefully we are becoming a society that appreciates people as a whole package instead of little parts on a checklist.

Q10: You're only 22, but you've already used your platform to raise awareness about social issues. You went to the Women's March in Washington, D.C. and donated $100,000 to Planned Parenthood earlier this year. How was that received?

HALSEY: The negativity around Planned Parenthood was crazy: "That's not your money. Someone's using you as a front to donate it." g"Whenever celebrities say they're donating money, they never really are; it's a company." No. I charged it to my personal Amex card. And the second-biggest response was "Why Planned Parenthood? Why not the ACLU? Why not LGBT causes? Why not blah blah blah?" I've got to fight one battle at a time.

Q11: You've been vocal about your endometriosis, and Planned Parenthood was instrumental in treating that, right?

HALSEY: Yeah! In 2015, I had a miscarriage on tour, and the first place I went was Planned Parenthood. All the responses were like, "Well, if you have $100,000 to donate, why did you have to go to Planned Parenthood?" Other people have controlled this negative narrative that it's a low-income place, this place in the ghetto, this place for abortions, this place where drug users go, this place where "slutty" girls go—I say "slutty" in quotes because I'm rolling my eyes at it. But it's a doctor's of-

"You can't cry 15 times in a meet-and-greet, but I still do. I hope I never lose that."

fice. I can afford some of the best health care in the fucking world and I still went there, because I trust it.

Q12: How do you handle the negativity that's constantly hurled at you?

HALSEY: When a society is inclined to get negative, that frequency spreads across everyone. Everyone's looking for a fight. There is a fight to fight, but some people are picking the wrong one and fighting people who are on their side. And everyone has become a detective.

Q13: A detective? Is that related to "first" culture, where everybody races to be the first to post about a trend or controversy?

HALSEY: That's completely what it is. Everyone's goal is to be the one to find out that someone's doing something wrong. A girl will post a photo of herself with braids and the first response will be "This is cultural appropriation. What the fuck is wrong with you?" And the girl will say, "I'm half black." Then the person's like, "Oh, sorry. You look pretty." We've become traumatized because so many people have actually committed cultural appropriation, but our instinct is too reflexive.

Q14: How did you navigate growing up biracial?

HALSEY: I'm half black. My dad managed a car dealership, wore a suit to work, had a nice watch, was always clean-shaven, handsome, played golf on the weekends. And people would come up to him like, "Yo, brotha! What's up!" And my dad would be like, "Hi…."

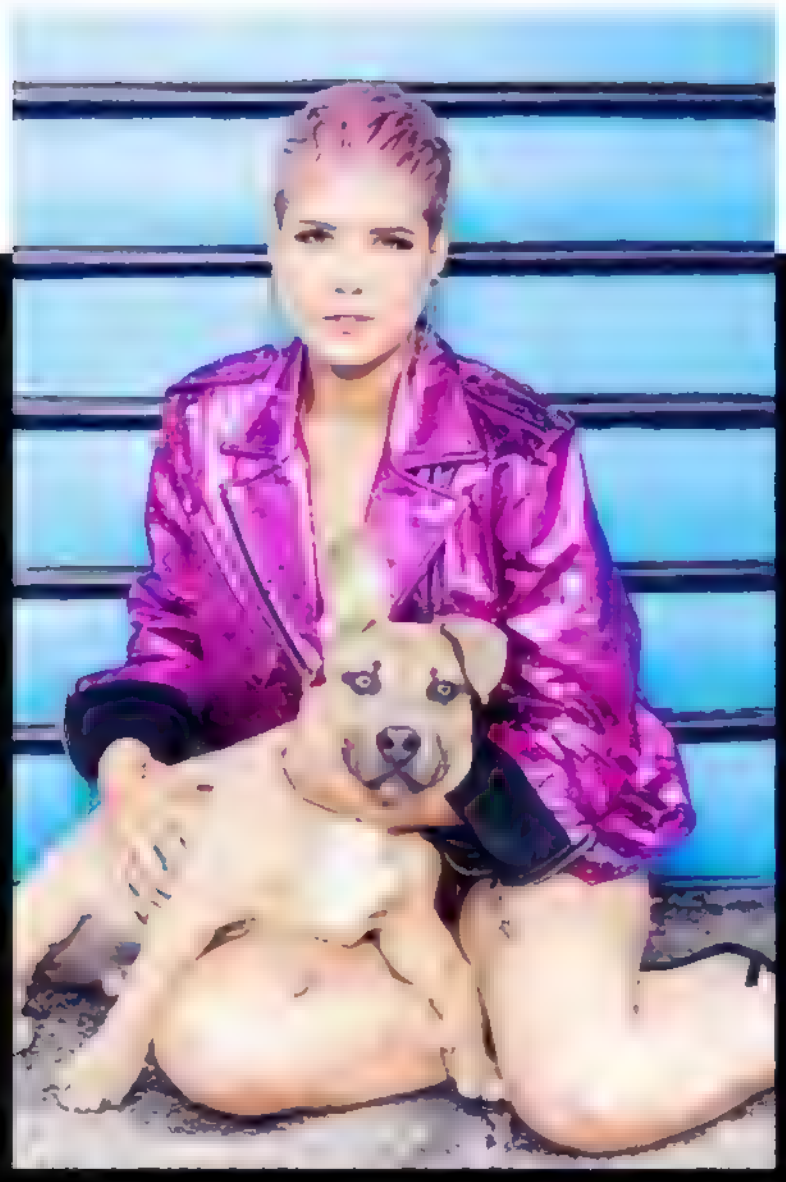
Q15: How did that affect you?

HALSEY: I'm white-passing. I've accepted that about myself and have never tried to control anything about black culture that's not mine. I'm proud to be in a biracial family, I'm proud of who I am, and I'm proud of my hair. One of my big jokes a long time ago was "I look white, but I still have white boys in my life asking me why my nipples are brown." Every now and then I experience these racial blips. I look like a white girl, but I don't feel like one. I'm a black woman. So it's been weird navigating that. When I was growing up I didn't know if I was supposed to love TLC or Britney.

Q16: How do people react when they do find out you're biracial?

HALSEY: White guilt is funny, but this is a really hard time for white allies. People don't want to do too much but want to do enough, and in my bubble of Los Angeles I'm surrounded by a lot of good people with a lot of good intentions. But as I learned in this past election, my bubble is just a small fraction of how this country operates. That is ultimately my greatest frustration with the public perception of any sort of activism: the mentality of "Well, it's not affecting me." Open your fucking eyes.

Q17: Your hallmark in interviews is being really open. Is that just your nature, the same way you've refused to censor yourself when writing lyrics?



fans out financially when they were struggling. Do you feel a responsibility toward them?

HALSEY: It has made me empathetic, but it's hard. I sign into Twitter and at any given moment there are a hundred kids messaging me: "My mom died. I hurt myself. I have an eating disorder. I'm failing school. My best friend committed suicide." It's amazing when I can be there for them, but that's still energy I carry all day long. I love that it hasn't numbed me. You can't cry 15 times in a meet-and-greet, but I still do. I hope I never lose that, because having the capacity to care in that way keeps you a decent human being. That's all I fucking want: to be a decent human being.

HALSEY: Sometimes I forget I'm doing interviews and I just talk to people. I have a friend who has been in the industry a very long time, and he said to me the other day, "Remember, the press is not your therapist." Being an artist is so fucking lonely, though. People forget that when I'm on tour, sometimes interviews are the only human interaction I get all day.

Q18: If it makes you feel better, oftentimes it's the only human interaction for the journalist too. Are there things you've regretted divulging?

HALSEY: Sometimes I give pieces of myself to everyone that I wish I could take back. As soon as I have my first child, articles will say, "Back in 2016, Halsey came out about having a miscarriage, so we're very happy for her." I'll be enjoying the happiest moment of my entire life, because I want to be a mom more than anything—if you told me tomorrow that I had to quit music but could have a happy family, I'd be like, "Sorry, guys, I'm out"—and I know the press will ruin it.

Q19: What spurred you to reveal your miscarriage to the press?

HALSEY: Every time I read a miscarriage story, it's about a happily married woman who loses a baby, and that's fucking terrible and I empathize, but I never read "A 20-year-old girl who's scared and alone and single had a miscarriage." And guess what—that happens all around the world every day. I wanted to say something about it because when I was going through it, I was fucking alone. I didn't know any artists I could have called and said, "Hey, I know this happened to you. What should I do? Gan I go back on tour? How long did it take for your hormones to realign?" I had no one to talk to.

Q20: You have open DMs on Twitter, and you've helped

SCENES
FROM A
DYSTOPIAN
AMERICA
COURTESY
OF TRUMP

Coming soon to a city near you? As the coronavirus body count grows, armed but unidentified police are grabbing peaceful protesters off the streets of Portland

BY **BRIAN KAREM**

Welcome to the latest edition of the dystopian state of America.

For reporters in the extended White House press pool, Tuesday's workday began just before nine a.m. when a junior member of the White House press staff announced over the loudspeaker that coronavirus testing would take place in the lower press offices.

The necessary nose swipes, performed with a cotton swab shovel and prompting tears or giggles, were done by 9:30 a.m., by which time the oppressive D.C. heat felt like a sweatsuit worn by an obese marathon runner. After being tested (a privilege relatively few have), members of the press pool were sent to wait in air-conditioned comfort in the West Wing basement.

Tuesday was a unique day at the White House—both press secretary Kayleigh McEnany and President Trump held briefings—that came on the heels of another unique weekend in the Trump administration: Federal troops were used in an American city in a way that would've made civil rights leaders like John Lewis (who passed away this weekend) cringe. The administration's goal on Tuesday was clear enough: Defend the dystopia and dismiss, or at least deflect, criticism of the president.

McEnany, still honing her skills as an enthusiastic propagandist, is getting used to working in the soft clay of about 14 stalwart, worn out and browbeaten reporters who would probably rather be anywhere than at a briefing listening to her bullshit.

The president, who for the first three years of his administration avoided the Brady Briefing Room as if it were the source of the coronavirus pandemic, had not been seen in a briefing since April, when he suggested we all inject disinfectant to battle the virus. But he was back with a vengeance Tuesday, after his latest debacle with jackbooted troops.

Last week federal police descended on Portland, Oregon, where camouflaged federal shock troops yanked peaceful protesters from the streets. Some called it kidnapping, or at least a violation of civil rights, but Trump said the feds were there to help. Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler had a different view. He said using the troops is "a direct threat to our democracy."

Trump has threatened to deploy these troops in other American cities.

"The tactics that the Trump administration are using on the streets of Portland are abhorrent," the mayor told CNN. p"People are being literally scooped off the street into unmarked vans, rental cars, apparently. They are being denied probable cause and they are denied due process."

The occupation of American cities run by Democrats or other people Trump doesn't like has begun. He certainly hasn't answered for this move, any more than he has answered for his inability to deal with bounties placed on overseas members of the U.S. military.

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Meanwhile, close to four million Americans have been diagnosed with the coronavirus, and more than 142,000 are dead as Trump continues to try to lie his way through a growing body count.

But Trump isn't worried about that. His concern is Joe Biden and the Democrats. On Sunday, Trump tweeted Democrats p"will destroy our Country as we know it."

"Unimaginably bad things would happen to America" if he loses this fall, he said. p"Look at Portland, where the pols are just fine with 50 days of anarchy. We sent in help. Look at New York, Chicago, Philadelphia. NO!"

Under the guise of protecting monuments and other government property, Trump is moving to solidify his control over the United States via any means available to him, constitutional or not. His goal is to intimidate and bully the republic into submission as a means to win an election in which some polls show him trailing presumptive Democratic challenger Joe Biden by a double-digit margin.

Trump's reaction is to squeeze and let his sycophants defend him.

McEnany continued her tone-deaf defense of Trump at Tuesday's briefing. She bragged about him being the "most tested" man in America—according to McEnany, the president is sometimes tested for coronavirus multiple times a day. This, at a time when many Americans can't get a single test, and those who can may have to wait two weeks for results.

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But bragging about presidential privilege wasn't McEnany's only sin. She defended federal troops grabbing citizens off the streets of Portland. Federal law enforcement officials didn't necessarily need to identify themselves to crowds, she said, because "it would put them at great risk."

The only people at risk are those who are swept up in unmarked vans and spirited away to some holding cell to be questioned and later released. The men dressed in fatigues sporting assault rifles and traveling in large numbers while driving unmarked vans are probably a little safer than your average citizen protester.

"Stick around while the clown who is sick does the trick of disaster," warned Neil Young in "Mr. Soul." That speaks as clearly to the frustration of today's protesters as it did to the protesters of the Vietnam war.

McEnany defends with gusto the actions of the president. In the White House narrative, all protesters are thugs who deface monuments, break windows and engage in unwarranted violence, and the president is the defender of justice.

But to protesters, Trump is as bad as Richard Nixon performing a sick trick of disaster on unarmed civilians.

The truth is, the protests I've covered in several cities during the past few months have mostly been peaceful. But even if they weren't, what could justify the complete abandonment of the rule of law by law enforcement? Of course those who break the law are going to ignore the law. That's what makes them lawbreakers. But when has that ever given those who are charged with enforcing our laws the right to break them too?

The nuance of that argument is lost on a president who brags about how often he is tested for coronavirus, despite having said the pandemic is a hoax and that too much testing leads to more cases. He sent camouflaged troops into an American city without any real justification so he can puff up his chest and prove his importance while contributing to the dystopia

And thus Trump rode into the press briefing room Tuesday

Trump exposed his privilege, his lack of understanding of the pandemic and his inability to understand the reality of the American people.

afternoon with contempt for Americans, the rule of law and his own fight against coronavirus.

Though Trump now says people should wear masks, he didn't show any respect for the reporters in the briefing room by wearing one.

For about 10 minutes Trump rattled on about his great accomplishments in stemming coronavirus. Then he dropped a bombshell, admitting the pandemic is going to get worse in the U.S. before it gets better. However, he reassured us, he is now finally "developing a strategy that's going to be very, very powerful."

As usual, Trump took no responsibility for the mess (which he blamed on China) and said we may never fully understand the virus. Paradoxically, he also said he was confident of a vaccine soon. And, he said, he always supported social distancing and never fought against masks, even though in the past he called the pandemic a hoax and often told us how quickly it would all be okay. Poof. It will all "magically disappear."

No experts accompanied Trump in the briefing room, but he claimed Dr. Deborah Birx was p"right outside." When asked whether he indeed was being tested more than once a day, Trump contradicted McEnany and said it was only two or three times a week. But twice a day? "I could see that happening," he added.

For the millions of Americans who struggle to get tested, Trump's statement was an almost subconscious admission of his privilege.

He simply has no idea of the reality of the situation. He never has.

He wouldn't even answer my question about protesters' civil rights being violated by federal officials in Portland. It doesn't compute in The Donald's fat, flaccid head.

Administration officials hoped the president would show up Tuesday and put to rest questions about his handling of coronavirus. He did the exact opposite. He exposed his privilege, his lack of understanding of the pandemic and his inability to understand the reality of the American people.

That lack of understanding drives the American dystopia. The United States is a heterogeneous country that does not fit neatly into Trump's preconceived and simplistic notions, and as hard as he tries to fashion the world as he sees it, he ultimately fails. He doesn't have all the answers. Hell, he doesn't even know the questions. "Nurses and helpers have become incredibly good at the use of ventilators," Trump reassured us. Does anyone in the White House understand how stupid Trump sounds?

We have the ability to end this in November. But if Donald Trump is reelected and we are subjected to four more years of his cognitive dissonance, the price of that dystopia will be the unraveling of America—a price many Americans don't want to or cannot pay.

Playboy Interview

Whoopi Goldberg

A candid conversation with the outspoken actress and host about taking on the Hollywood establishment and Jesse Jackson, and why you better not call her African American

INTERVIEW BY **DAVID SHEFF**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DAVID ROSE**

It wasn't Marilyn Monroe but Whoopi Goldberg, hair tumbling over her forehead, standing on the Radio City Music Hall stage facing the president of the U.S. at his 50th birthday party and threatening to sing p"Happy Birthday, Mr. President." "I was going to wear a blonde wig," she joked, "but I see that Jack Kemp already has the wig." The crowd including Bill Clinton roared.

Clinton has long been one of Goldberg's biggest and most public fans, especially of her movie Sister Act. m"I wanted to be in that choir so bad I could spit," he said.) Besides hanging out with the Clintons and roasting Republicans on his behalf (a typical pre-election one-liner: "Will someone please introduce Lorena Bobbitt to Bob Dole?"), Goldberg has, for the better part of two decades, been working nonstop. During the past year alone, she released three movies and served a second tour of duty as emcee of the Academy Awards ceremony. Her Oscar night performance was vintage Goldberg provoking equal parts applause and outrage.

Wearing a black gown that won her top honors in one poll as worst-dressed woman, Goldberg set the tone at the best Academy Awards ceremony in years with a pointed

and hilarious monologue. She immediately took aim at some sacred targets. p"I want to say something to all the people who sent me ribbons to wear," she said. "You don't ask a black woman to buy an expensive dress and then cover it with ribbons." She then fired off a list of ribbons that she chose not to wear: "I got a red ribbon for AIDS awareness. Done. I got a purple ribbon for breast cancer. Done. I got a yellow ribbon for the troops in Bosnia. Done. I got a green ribbon to free the Chinese dissidents. Done. I got a milky white ribbon for mad-cow disease. Done. Done. Done again."

She also ribbed actor Charlie Sheen, who gained attention for being a frequent ($50,000) customer of Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss. Goldberg noted that three actresses who were nominated for Oscars—Sharon Stone, Mira Sorvino and Elisabeth Shue—portrayed hookers in the year's movies, and asked, p"How many times did Charlie Sheen get to vote, anyway?"

But the most contentious part of the show came when she took on the Reverend Jesse Jackson, who had called for a protest against the Academy Awards ceremony, complaining that there was only one black nominee. p"I had something I wanted to say to Jesse right here, but he's not watching, so why bother?" she said In fact, she treated him and his protest with such thinly veiled disdain that a political firestorm ensued. She was sharply criticized by minority organizations, as well as by some producers and directors, who said that her remarks marginalized and belittled Jackson and the issue he raised: racism in the motion picture industry. But Goldberg also had her supporters, who thought the protest was inappropriate at an awards ceremony that was hosted by Goldberg, produced by Quincy Jones and featured other prominent African Americans, including Laurence Fishburne and Sidney Poitier.

"I'm not an African American. I'm pure-bred, New York–raised. Calling me an African American divides us further. I am as American as baseball. I don't have to excuse the fact that I am black-skinned."

As always, the attacks rolled off her back. A veteran of controversy, Goldberg has frequented the tabloids since her painful, tumultuous and well-documented affair with Ted Danson. The p"tabloid twins," as Goldberg dubbed them, suffered a barrage of bad publicity when Danson left his wife and children for Goldberg. Things began to disintegrate for the couple after Danson made his infamous appearance at a Friars Club roast of Goldberg in 1993. Reciting material he and Goldberg wrote together, Danson, in blackface, told jokes that many denounced as racist. Several guests, including talk-show host Montel Williams, walked out. Others, such as New York mayor David Dinkins, Jackson and Dionne Warwick, attacked Goldberg and Danson in the press. The couple suffered a bitter and highly publicized split soon after.

Goldberg, who is 41, then wed for the third time—there were two brief marriages before, one in 1973 and the other in 1986—to union organizer Lyle Trachtenberg in 1994. After announcing their engagement, the couple married at her Los Angeles home, where the words fuck off were painted on the roof to frustrate airborne media. The marriage ended a year later, and Goldberg is now in a relationship with Frank Langella, whom she met while filming the basketball movie Eddie, one of this past summer's quiet successes. As she has said, m"It's been a hell of a time."

Goldberg was born Caryn Johnson in 1955. Raised by her mother, a nurse and Head Start teacher, Goldberg grew up p"poor but never hungry" in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York City. At the age of eight, she acted in children's theater and took the bus to museums, the ballet and plays. Despite her mother's best efforts, Goldberg could not escape the influences of her neighborhood. She admits she did "every drug" and dropped out of high school "I couldn't pull it off"). At 18, she married her drug counselor and got pregnant soon after—her daughter Alexandrea, age 22, has her own daughter, and Goldberg is the proverbial doting grandmother. Goldberg made her living at a number of jobs—including doing makeup and fixing hair in a funeral parlor—and survived on welfare after heading to San Diego, without her first husband, in 1974. She then moved to Berkeley and joined the Blake Street Hawkeyes Theater. It was there that she changed her name. (Her first name derived from whoopee-cushion jokes; her last was suggested by her mother to honor Jewish ancestors. The name led to a classic Milton Berle line: "A black woman with a Jewish name. She doesn't do windows because she's got a headache.")

In the early 1980s, Goldberg developed The Spook Show, a one-woman tour de force with such unforgettable characters as a junkie with a heart of gold and a surfer chick who, in Valley Girlese, tells about her coat-hanger abortion. There were other theater pieces, including a brilliant tribute to one of her heroes, Moms Mabley.

Goldberg was discovered performing in New York by director Mike Nichols, who brought The Spook Show to Broadway in 1984. It led to a Grammy-winning comedy album and a private performance for Steven Spielberg and some of his friends, including Michael Jackson. That, in turn, led to Goldberg's first film role as Celie, the abused but ultimately triumphant main character in Spielberg's version of Alice Walker's The Color Purple. The performance earned Goldberg her first Golden Globe and an Academy Award nomination for best actress

There have been more than 30 movies since. They have varied widely, from forgettable comedies to poignant dramas, including Jumpin' Jack Flash, Burglar, Fatal Beauty, Clara's Heart, The Long Walk Home, Soapdish, The Player, Made in America, Naked in New York, Moonlight & Valentino, Theodore Rex, Sarafina!, Boys on the Side, Corrina, Corrina, Bogus and Eddie, as well as her role as the voice of the head hyena in The Lion King. There have been blockbusters—Ghost, for instance, for which she won a Best Supporting Actress Oscar in 1991, and Sister Act, which led to a record-setting salary of $8 million for the sequel (a box-office

disappointment). She also had a recurring role as Guinan, the psychic bartender, on the TV series Star Trek: The Next Generation and in the 1994 movie Star Trek: Generations and hosted her own syndicated TV talk show, The Whoopi Goldberg Show. In her most recent movie, Ghosts of Mississippi, she plays Myrlie Evers, wife of slain civil rights leader Medgar Evers, in a drama directed by Rob Reiner.

Goldberg, who divides her time among a New England farm, a Manhattan apartment and a Hollywood home, was between films when Contributing Editor David Sheff sat down with her to begin the interview. Here's Sheff's report:

"Because her Manhattan apartment was being renovated, I met Goldberg at a hotel on the Upper East Side where Paul Davis, the artist and photographer, was taking glamour shots of her for a fund-raising performance. Goldberg batted her eyelashes at him and made self-effacing jokes about how she might have broken his camera. Although no one would describe her as a classic beauty, she nonetheless looked gorgeous, with her large brown eyes, crown of hair and smile that could melt ice.

"Goldberg was in a great mood after hanging out the night before with her pal Bill Clinton at his 50th birthday celebration. After the photo session, when we sat down in a private room at the hotel restaurant (where she indulged herself with bacon and Marlboros), she mused aloud about the unlikely company she now keeps. 'I'm exactly the kind of person the Secret Service is paid to keep away from most presidents,' she said. I mean, this is the president we're talking about. Not the president of the PTA, either.'"

PLAYBOY: Does Clinton have a good sense of humor?
GOLDBERG: He has a great sense of humor — he's hysterical. I'm convinced he wants to be a comedian.
PLAYBOY: Could he make it on the circuit?
GOLDBERG: I'd pay money to see him. And the First Lady — she is very funny too. We laugh a lot when we're together. I genuinely like them. I like them because they are real. I don't care about anybody's skeletons, you know, because I'm so busy holding back my own. But from my limited view, they are people who believe there is a better way. I trust them.
PLAYBOY: How does it feel to be friends with the president?
GOLDBERG: Shit, I get to talk to the president of the United States and have opinions that people are actually interested in. It is pretty groovy.
PLAYBOY: Groovy?
GOLDBERG: Yeah, I'm a hippie. Can't help it.
PLAYBOY: Meaning what?
GOLDBERG: Oh, all that good hippie stuff. I mean that I believe one person can make a difference, that we are responsible for other people. You know, peace and love. It's out of fashion, but it's really a great way to live. I believe in peace and brotherhood and all that stuff.
PLAYBOY: Are you trying to communicate these values in the movies you choose?
GOLDBERG: When I can, though I do all kinds of movies.
PLAYBOY: In Ghosts of Mississippi, you play the widow of NAACP leader Medgar Evers. Was that a labor of love?
GOLDBERG: Yeah, definitely. It's a true story that many people don't know about. Evers was killed in 1963 by a man named Byron de la Beckwith, who was tried twice by white juries and got off both times. I get to play Evers's widow, Myrlie. She's an incredible woman. She kept the flame of her husband alive for 30 years to make sure that the guy who murdered him — who shot him in the back — went to jail.
PLAYBOY: Do you find it tough to play a living person?
GOLDBERG: Sure is. Myrlie was as much of a stretch for me as anything I've done. I kind of roll along down the street, carrying four bags at one time, a mess, and Myrlie Evers glides into a room. She is a presence. She lives in Oregon now, and I really wanted her to like the movie. She is happy with it, which was like, whew. You can't take a whole lot of liberties with people who can knock on your door and tell you how badly you screwed up the whole thing. Her response and the response of their children meant more than that of any others. Evers was murdered in front of those kids. He was shot and crawled to the front door and died in his wife's arms with the children standing there crying, g"Daddy, get up. Daddy, please get up."
PLAYBOY: Some people would say that Rob Reiner, who directed the movie, was not the one to tell this story, that stories about black people should be told by black people. Do you disagree?
GOLDBERG: I do. One reason black filmmakers tend to bring black stories to the forefront is that those stories aren't often told. But filmmakers should be able to tell whatever story they are inspired to tell.
PLAYBOY: You've been through this before. Steven Spielberg was criticized for making The Color Purple.
GOLDBERG: Yeah, and that's just as crazy. The fact is that Steven Spielberg [*she gets a huge smile*] — I think he's the cat's pajamas. He is the best person and he made a beautiful movie. It is not about being black or white, it's about being a good storyteller. He is. So is Rob Reiner. Reiner is a king in my book. He's a joy to work with. I'm very lucky because now I'm working with more directors who know what they're doing.
PLAYBOY: As opposed to?
GOLDBERG: Let's just say that some of the directors I have worked with haven't known much of anything.
PLAYBOY: Can't you pick and choose the directors you work with?
GOLDBERG: Yeah, right. [Laughs] Unfortunately, I'm not in that position.
PLAYBOY: Doesn't clout come when you're a big box-office draw?
GOLDBERG: I do get more money, but the attitude becomes, g"We're paying you all this money, so shut up and do the work." Which is why it has been said that I'm difficult. The best directors will tell you that I'm a pussycat. [*Smiles*]
PLAYBOY: Then what happens?
GOLDBERG: I just have ideas about the way things should work. I've been doing this awhile now, and I occasionally do have a good idea. The fact is, I'm a collaborator. I'm from the theater. The theater is based on collaboration. So I've learned to collaborate a lot more quietly.
PLAYBOY: Do movies suffer when directors don't listen?
GOLDBERG: Sister Act 2 is an example. I knew that you couldn't make that movie unless you had the nuns from the original movie in it. They were the driving force; people fell in love with them. I fought and fought and fought and fought to have them in the story, which contributed to my bad reputation.
PLAYBOY: Yet for that movie, you set a record for a female actor in Hollywood at that time—making $8 million.
GOLDBERG: Maybe if I were more consistent, making lots of movies that made $100 million, directors would listen. But my movies tend to be great movies that are critically acclaimed and make no money, or movies that aren't so critically acclaimed and make a ton of money, or those that aren't so critically acclaimed and don't make any money. Arnold's movies make a zillion dollars

no matter what he does, so he can do what he wants. Sly's movies tend to make a zillion dollars and he can do what he wants. Other people get paid a lot of money sometimes, and then get a lot more leeway than I get. But you can't spend time saying, g"She has it and I don't." You just can't.

PLAYBOY: Do you always go for creative control?

GOLDBERG: I always ask. The bottom line is that directors find I really do know a lot in terms of what needs to happen. I know how to fill the holes. I have turned a lot of shit into sterling silver

PLAYBOY: So you agree with a critic from Time magazine who wrote, m"She has the ability to turn a routine flick into a pretty good movie entirely on her own."

GOLDBERG: Yeah. And imagine what I can do with a really good flick. But it goes back to how people visualize the world. They may think of me when they need a maid.

PLAYBOY: Didn't you once say that you would never play a maid?

GOLDBERG: No. I never said I wouldn't play a maid. I said that I wouldn't just play maids. But in the words of Hattie McDaniel, g"Better to play one than to be one." She used to get a lot of shit for the roles she was playing, too, but people don't realize that she wasn't turning down Scarlett O'Hara. Nobody said, "Hey, will you do Stella?" to which she said, "No, I've got to go play this maid!" In my case, I've never played a maid who wasn't a lead in the movie. And the story of these women, who clean other people's houses and take care of their children, is a worthy one to tell. Whether it's Corrina, Corrina or others, though, there are people who say, m"Oh, she's playing a maid again." I am happy to play a maid if the movie is good. In general, good movies don't always come to me—in fact, I go out and find work. I call people. I say, "I hear you're doing this movie and I want to be in it."

"Maybe I got married a few too many times. It's because I love a good party, but I have recently realized that I can actually just throw a good party and not get married. I think I've learned that."

PLAYBOY: Who have you called recently?

GOLDBERG: I've been calling Clint Eastwood. He's getting ready to do a movie of a book that I thought was extraordinary, Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil. I would love to play the drag queen, Lady Chablis. He's probably going to end up using the real Lady Chablis, but I called. I said, m"I can play a man playing a woman, and I would love to do this. I can pull it off." Whatever he decides, I will continue to actively look for good roles. I want to make a movie about a really bad person. One of my favorite performances was Anthony Hopkins's in The Silence of the Lambs. At first you think you might want to get to know this guy, and then he says something that makes you back up and realize he will bite your face if you get close enough. Would I be somebody's first choice for a character like that? No. I wanted to do Cutthroat Island because I think I would be a great pirate—I could get real dirty and fight with a sword and still be sort of charming, I think. But I'm not statuesque and beautiful.

PLAYBOY: You mean, like the star of that movie, Geena Davis?

GOLDBERG: [*Smiles*] No, though I am very attractive and get cuter the older I get. I'm even getting well, not statuesque, but I'm growing. [*Laughs*] I'm expanding. That's the best way to put it. But still no calls.

PLAYBOY: You're probably lucky that you didn't do Cutthroat Island. It flopped.

GOLDBERG: But it might have been a different movie, you know.

PLAYBOY: When are you thought of for movie roles?

GOLDBERG: I don't know. I've gotten a lot of movies when other actors dropped out. Burglar was for Bruce Willis. Jumpin' Jack Flash was for Shelley Long. Fatal Beauty was for Cher. Most of my career consists of movies that were meant for other people. I mean, thank God Bette Midler didn't want to do Sister Act.

PLAYBOY: Was it a letdown to go from serious works such as The Color Purple and your one-woman show, which touched on many social problems, to your next movie, Jumpin' Jack Flash?

GOLDBERG: No. It is a piece of fluff, but people still tell me how much they loved it. I've done some wild films, you know. Some weren't financially successful, but there are none I would hang my head to. That one and Fatal Beauty are mind candy. They're not going to fix the Bosnian problem, but they don't set out to. Also, everybody says, m"Well, why aren't you doing more Color Purples?" But that's not what people are asking me to do. It's not like somebody handed me another Color Purple and Jumpin' Jack Flash, and I said, m"I choose Jumpin' Jack Flash." At the time, however, I was just amazed to be doing what I was doing. It was other people who were criticizing me. I took heat for the movies I did; there were about four or five years of intense heat.

PLAYBOY: The gist of it was what?

GOLDBERG: That I didn't have it. That I was a flash in the pan. But I kept working. I tried to get other movies. When I heard they were making The Princess Bride into a movie I said, m"Let me audition for that." It was a big lesson for me about how it works and what you're supposed to look like. They laughed. "Is she crazy?" I said, "But the book is about a princess who doesn't look like anybody else, who has a very different attitude. So why not me?" It hurt my feelings because I thought, Are you telling me that because you think I couldn't be a princess that all these other doors are going to slam too? Basically, yes. So I took the stuff that nobody seemed to have a problem with me doing.

PLAYBOY: Like Burglar?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, which was fun and silly too. That was my macho period. I had the best time: motorcycles and leather jackets and blue contact lenses! Though when I did it I was criticized because I didn't turn out to be the female answer to Eddie Murphy.

PLAYBOY: Meaning?

GOLDBERG: Meaning the movie didn't do Eddie Murphy business; it didn't produce tremendous amounts of money at the box office.
PLAYBOY: Sister Act did, though. How did that change things?
GOLDBERG: I received lots more money for some of the big movies, but great movies still didn't come flying at me.
PLAYBOY: After that movie, it was reported that you sent Jeffrey Katzenberg, the Disney executive in charge, a hatchet in the mail. Did you?
GOLDBERG: Yeah. Because he and I didn't click immediately. There were things about Sister Act that weren't as good as they could have been, and I tried to make them better—and Jeffrey thought I might have overstepped my bounds.
PLAYBOY: By giving ideas to the director?
GOLDBERG: Ideas? Yeah. And they weren't really as open as I hoped they would be. I just wanted to make things better. I don't know what their experience had been with other actors, but we had an antagonistic relationship. I finally said, g"This is ridiculous." I sent him a hatchet and said, "Let's bury it," and he sent me back a present. [*Smiles broadly*] A pair of brass balls. And that began our friendship.
PLAYBOY: Ghost was another big success. How did that one come to you?
GOLDBERG: I heard about it and said I wanted to try for it, but my agent said they didn't want me. g"But why not? What did I do?" I said, "At least let me read for it." "Well, they feel you would bring Whoopi Goldberg baggage." "What is Whoopi Goldberg baggage? What does that mean?" So they wouldn't see me. Eventually I got a call, though. Patrick Swayze insisted they call me. He said he did it because he was a fan. Two weeks later I had the part.
PLAYBOY: The movie launched Demi Moore and brought you an Oscar. Did you expect it?
GOLDBERG: No. The statue came and it was pretty groovy, I have to say. Movies I thought would have gotten me nominated just fell by the wayside, such as The Long Walk Home, which is some of my best work. But nothing—nothing, nothing, nothing. So you just kind of go, g"Oh, well," and move on. But this was nice.
PLAYBOY: You've played more than one psychic. Are you interested in that world?
GOLDBERG: Oh, yeah. I'm a big believer that people are still here. They aren't forced to stay, they're here by choice—they're here just watching. Some people were miserable in life and they're miserable in death, which is why we have loud and angry ghosts—their essence stays. A ghost to me is like perfume. Many people can dab it on and you get different wafts and different smells at different times. People who worked in this profession are with me at times.
PLAYBOY: Who?
GOLDBERG: John Garfield is with me. Parts of James Cagney, some Bette Davis. Moms Mabley is with me all the time. A great much of her is on my shoulder. Periodically, I feel wafts of Dorothy Dandridge. I mean, you look at me and think, Why you? My crossover has been pretty big—worldwide, in fact. So you have to believe that a whole lot of folks are behind you, helping you break it out.
PLAYBOY: Is it incomprehensible that you've accomplished what you've accomplished yourself?
GOLDBERG: I've always felt that smatterings of other people have made my path easier. Basically, I've had it laid out on a silver platter; I mean, really. It's been placed in my hand, and I've been ushered into a foreign land and treated rather well, you know. In hindsight, I've done a lot better than a lot of people with a lot more talent, and I didn't self-destruct.
PLAYBOY: But where does talent come in?
GOLDBERG: Jack Nicholson is talented. Brando. De Niro. I'm nothing compared with great actors like that. There are a lot of talented actors out there, but maybe the camera doesn't like their face or, you know, they're not good at auditions, or whatever. I just know I'm one of the luckiest people on earth.
PLAYBOY: Did The Player sum up your view of Hollywood?
GOLDBERG: It was Robert Altman's view, but it's about right. It's that silly sometimes. Not quite murder, but you never know.
PLAYBOY: In Boys on the Side your character is a lesbian. Was it gratifying that the lesbian community applauded your portrayal?
GOLDBERG: Yeah. I did an interview with Lea DeLaria for The Advocate. She said, m"You were in, girl, you were in. We loved you." That was good to hear. People have asked, "Was it difficult to portray a lesbian?" No. It was just like I portray anybody else. I don't have to walk around in muscle shirts with a pack of Marlboros rolled up in my sleeve. The faces of lesbians have changed. They are no longer only short-haired, cigar-smoking, motorcycle-

riding women. These are real women. And I'm an actor. I can become whatever is required.

PLAYBOY: Including an elderly man in The Associate.

GOLDBERG: I play a woman who is really, really good on Wall Street—she takes care of all the business and is in a high position. But because she's black and a woman, she ain't going any higher. So she creates this man and suddenly everyone wants her—or him.

PLAYBOY: Though you've made hits and misses, is it still risky to be in a movie that bombs as badly as Theodore Rex, which went directly to video?

GOLDBERG: It seems it would be, but my career doesn't make much sense as it is. I should not have had the career I'm having. Normally, two or three box-office flops can murder a career. But I've had a few more of those. Yet despite everything, people seem to know that my potential is long-range. So they put me in movies. And people go to see my movies. Eddie opened in the middle of Twister, The Rock and Independence Day and did well. It didn't feature bombs exploding. It didn't have a shot of breasts. Nothing but silly fluff comedy, and it lived. That says something.

PLAYBOY: Were you a Trekkie before you joined the cast of Star Trek?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yeah. I love Star Trek, always have. I love science fiction, especially horror science fiction. I praised the heavens when the science fiction channel finally came. I love James Whitmore, the giant ants under L.A. I love Them! and Village of the Damned and Planet of the Apes and The Omega Man, which is one of my favorites. And Soylent Green. I love any of the old Universal horror stuff. I loved Thriller, the Boris Karloff TV show.

PLAYBOY: How about The X-Files?

GOLDBERG: I love The X-Files. I've been on Chris Carter for the past couple of years to do that show. He told me I have to find time. I just love the idea that there is this group in the government that knows all these strange things are happening. You know David Duchovny knows and is trying to find where his sister went in the link. It's just the best. The best.

PLAYBOY: Did Star Trek bring you a new type of fan?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yes. I get a lot of mail from Trekkies. They send me pictures of themselves dressed as me. People put down Trekkies because they don't really understand what they are. The thing is, they are people who want this idea of the future to be real, where there's a united front and a future where all types of people hang together and fly through the galaxy and it is very hip.

PLAYBOY: As opposed to the Independence Day view of the future, in which aliens attack Earth?

GOLDBERG: Yeah, and this is what I have to say about Independence Day, though it is very unchic to say: I didn't care for it at all. It really bugged me. I was glad to see all those actors working, but if you're going to do War of the Worlds, then do it. Do it right. Pay attention. Don't put bucket seats with seat belts in an alien craft. Don't have a lady running down a tunnel with a fireball chasing her, and have the fireball pass her by and she doesn't even break a sweat. I mean, come on. Jeff Goldblum comes in drunk—he's throwing stuff around and his father says, m"Get up off the floor, you're going to catch a cold." Goldblum gets up and says, "Catch a cold?" and he's sober as all get out. Wait a minute, you were drunk as a skunk a second ago! I want to know where all the clothing came from that the women were changing into once they got into the bunker. Was there a Gap down there? When Bill Pullman comes back and his little daughter is waiting, there is a woman holding her, and she gently thrusts the little girl toward Bill. The woman is wearing pearls—double-stranded pearls. And her outfit is newly pressed. I'm looking at this woman thinking, Where the fuck did you come from? I was very bummed.

PLAYBOY: Would you like to travel in space?

GOLDBERG: Ooh, yeah. But I have to do more to prepare. Right now I can barely operate a computer. I'm very slow. I just play Jeopardy.

PLAYBOY: Have you been on the Internet?

GOLDBERG: The Internet is one of those things I'm not sure about. I just don't get it. And technology is moving at such a rate that I can't really keep up with it. I was in London recently, reading about these chips they want to put into little children. I'm not sure. I'm just not sure. I don't trust bar codes. Why can't I read them? Why can't I know what that bar code says? It's a secret code and we're kept out of the loop. Scary.

PLAYBOY: Have you seen any of the sites on the Web that cover you?

GOLDBERG: No, though I've heard it's all over the place, especially Star Trek stuff. And let me remind everybody who does those things that my birth date is November 13, 1955. For some reason, everybody has my birthday wrong in every biography. Let's get it right, y'all.

PLAYBOY: What was it like turning 40?

GOLDBERG: If you read stuff about me, I've been 40 for 10 years. I'm almost 60 in some circles.

PLAYBOY: Is the confusion based on your attempts to shave off a few years like other actors have been known to do?

GOLDBERG: I used to make myself older, not younger, because people would always tell me I was too young for the parts I was going after. So I gave myself two years. Now those two years have multiplied into eight or 10 or 20. In some reports I'm 48, some I'm 51, some I'm in my 30s. I'm 41.

PLAYBOY: Was it psychically difficult to hit 40?

GOLDBERG: No, I was so happy. I finally felt like I was growing into myself. I'm now growing into my face and growing into my thoughts, and I'm clearer about a lot of things. Everything is pretty great.

PLAYBOY: It's been written that you met Frank Langella on the set of Eddie—and he's your boyfriend of the moment.

GOLDBERG: g"Your boyfriend of the moment." Now does that sound trite or what? How about, "The man with whom I'm living and sharing my life." That's more elegant.

PLAYBOY: Do you plan to get married?

GOLDBERG: No. I'm just happy to be with him. He is wonderful. He is funny. It's one of the great things about our relationship—we get to laugh a lot. But I also have a great deal of respect for him. He is about the finest American stage actor we have. His work, since I was a young actor, was kind of like a goal. Design for Living, Booth, Dracula, The Father. Just endless. When I first met him on the set of Eddie, I said, m"Why are you doing this movie?" He said, "This is probably the only way we'll ever get to work together."

PLAYBOY: So there was romance from the start.

GOLDBERG: [*Smiles*] Hoo-ha. But it was more about working together then. In my mind, I had to come up to his level. He's extraordinary and a really good guy. Which is not to say that the other men in my life haven't been. They were nice men, but somehow there's something extra extraordinary about this one. I'm taking it a day at a time. And, by the way, he's cute. I had to add that. He's fine, as my daughter would say.

PLAYBOY: By now, are you used to questions about your relationships?

GOLDBERG: I'm not used to it at all. It wasn't always like this. The public didn't really care until I got involved with Ted Danson. Since

then it has become a real thing in my life. It just doesn't go away.
PLAYBOY: How does it affect you?
GOLDBERG: It's hard enough to have a relationship, but to have a relationship under a microscope is harder. You always want to rebut everything you see that isn't accurate. I don't mind if you think I'm an asshole, but I want you to think I'm an asshole for the right reasons. It's hard on everyone around me. When it's really inaccurate it bugs the shit out of me.
PLAYBOY: Was the scandal over the Friars Club roast the low point for you and Ted Danson?
GOLDBERG: I had a good time at the Friars Club. It was funny.
PLAYBOY: Not everyone agreed.
GOLDBERG: No, but people who didn't get it were people who didn't understand what a Friars Club roast is. No one warned us that they had opened it to the public and that the people on the dais had no idea what the hell we were doing. I feel like we were set up. If people understood what a Friars roast was, they wouldn't have been shocked at all. And this was one of the funnier roasts that had been done. But sadly they chose to take something that was done in fun and turn it into a lot of bullshit.
PLAYBOY: Do you think people were genuinely offended, or was the reaction built up by the media?
GOLDBERG: I think they were genuinely offended
PLAYBOY: Roast or no roast, do you disagree that blackface is simply bad taste—and is a form of true racism?
GOLDBERG: I do. Was it in bad taste? The Friars Club is in bad taste. That's the idea. It's about, g"Your ass is so wide that " or "Your mother gave head to " That's what it's about. RuPaul came out and talked about how he taught me how to give head. We were making a point.
PLAYBOY: What exactly was the point?
GOLDBERG: Even in hip Hollywood, there are people who are uncomfortable with a white man and a black woman. The stereotypes prevail. So I took them on. Ted and I used to get a lot of really hateful mail. We took it and pushed it to the limit. That was the point of Ted wearing blackface. Instead of people understanding, they looked at it as something they could jump on. I said then, as I say now, fuck them.
PLAYBOY: Fuck the black leaders as well as the black and white press that criticized you?
GOLDBERG: Fuck them. What makes me sad is that it made Ted very uncomfortable. For that I'm sorry. But I'm not sorry at all that we did it, nor that I encouraged it.
PLAYBOY: Do you think Ted is sorry that he did it?
GOLDBERG: Yes, I do think he's sorry he did it.
PLAYBOY: Because he cared what people thought?
GOLDBERG: He cared very much that people said he was a racist. I wish him well. I hope his new show works and that his new marriage is happy. I hope one day we'll be able to sit down and talk about it with some laughter.
PLAYBOY: You don't speak now?
GOLDBERG: No, and I'm sure we won't for a very long time. I don't have any problem with what happened. But he does.
PLAYBOY: Did the hate mail come mostly from white extremists?
GOLDBERG: Them, and also from lots of black people. Black people were incensed. Again, I've never been politically correct and never will be politically correct, and I will go where I want to go.
PLAYBOY: Since the incident, have you spoken with any of the people who criticized you publicly Montel Williams or Dionne Warwick?
GOLDBERG: I spoke with Dionne. I said, g"Look, you know what the Friars Club roast is." She said, "Yeah, but it got out." I said, "But that's not my fault. If you have a problem you should talk to the Friars Club." She said, "You're right." I don't have anything to say to Montel because Montel went out for himself. He got the publicity he needed. He used us as a soapbox. I think in retrospect that he's unhappy he did it, because I think he's had a little firestorm of his own, and suddenly it occurs to him that that's what happens when someone puts your business in the street. Hey, it's OK. I'm going to piss people off again. I hope I'm not going to piss people off throughout my life.
PLAYBOY: Do you have a lot of time for your family?
GOLDBERG: More and more. I'm a workaholic, but I'm trying to take some breaks. We've been spending more and more time together. I'm cleaning baby spit off my shirt and playing with my granddaughter and watching her cannonball into the pool.
PLAYBOY: Your daughter's father was your first husband as well as your drug counselor. How did you meet and fall in love?
GOLDBERG: I felt I had better do something because I didn't know what was coming. I got married, but it wasn't particularly right for either of us. I got pregnant and had this little baby, and I left my husband and went to San Diego. I had a couple of relationships and then didn't have a relationship for, like, six years. I met another man and had a five-year relationship, and he helped me raise my daughter. Then I came to New York and did my show, and it was tough on him, so he went away. And then I didn't get married. I went out with a couple of people and then slipped back into a little drug haze and woke up married to somebody else.
PLAYBOY: And that was your second marriage?
GOLDBERG: Yeah, and it took me about a year and a half to get out of that, and then I went into another really bad relationship. I then went into what I thought had the potential of being a good relationship, but it didn't work out, and I met another guy and got married, and then I realized I had made a mistake and said, "I've made a mistake. I'm really sorry," and was in the process of getting out

"People seem to forget that the fact that I'm here is a huge statement. In a previous generation, a black actor may have had to fit a mold. But this is me. These are my lips, my nose, my hair, my butt."

of that when I met Frank. So, you know, it's kind of normal, except that maybe I got married a few too many times. It's because I love a good party, but I have recently realized that I can actually just throw a party and not get married. I think I've learned that. Now I'm more interested in a caring, loving relationship, which is what I have now.

PLAYBOY: Are you more capable of having one now?

GOLDBERG: Yes. You start telling yourself the truth, you know. You start facing reality. Being in love with someone and being with someone is work, and it's daily, and it's not a Band-Aid.

PLAYBOY: Did relationships used to be Band-Aids?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yes. I thought that they would make me feel better. I thought they would protect me.

PLAYBOY: Protect you from what?

GOLDBERG: The world. But now I know you're only better if you feel better inside. You have to do the repair work that's required.

PLAYBOY: Were drugs other Band-Aids?

GOLDBERG: Yes. Band-Aids that don't work. They were a way not to feel pain or mistakes.

PLAYBOY: What drugs did you do?

GOLDBERG: How much time do you have? I did everything.

PLAYBOY: Was it difficult for you to stop?

GOLDBERG: It was difficult until I figured out why I did them. You don't want to hurt, but the wound gets bigger and festers. So I stopped doing all drugs and I faced those wounds and felt the pain. It hurts, but it does heal.

PLAYBOY: What advice did you give your daughter when she got pregnant at 15?

GOLDBERG: I understood why she had done it, which was to have some identity other than being my child. At 15 you want your own identity.

PLAYBOY: Were you upset that she was having a baby that young?

GOLDBERG: Yes, but I would support her no matter what came along. I practice what I preach: You have to support your children. I wasn't going to turn her out or make her feel bad. She was scared. That let me know that our relationship was still good, even though it's inevitably in that mother-daughter tunnel. But she came to me first and she said, "Mommy?" And I said, "What?" She said, "I'm pregnant." I said, "Well, what do you want to do?" She said, "I want to have it." I said, "OK. You know it's a lot of work. It's not easy and there will be times when you're not going to want to be bothered." She said, "I'm ready." I said OK, knowing full well that this was a task for the family. Now her baby, born on my birthday, is seven—and fantastic.

PLAYBOY: Didn't you advise her to have an abortion—to wait to have a child?

GOLDBERG: You can't tell kids much these days. They're much older than we were. All we can do is try to create environments for those who choose to have their children. And there will be more of them if the extreme right gets its way. If they abolish or make it harder to have an abortion, there will be more children with babies. But if our kids have children, we have to help them through it. We've got to hunker down and make the best of it and not let them go by the wayside. We ought to be giving some of these young boys an education, too. Where are they all? If they are going to have children, they need to be prepared for the responsibility that comes with fathering. We need to start making the boys as accountable as the girls are. I think if there were more guidance and money in the programs that the Republicans want to cut, we'd find fewer babies in garbage cans. We'd find fewer parents snapping under pressure, and there would be a lot less child abuse.

PLAYBOY: As a former welfare mother, do you support the welfare bill?

GOLDBERG: I worry that there are too many children who are going to fall by the wayside. Listen, I know welfare. It is very degrading. And people don't go on welfare because they want to, despite what the Republicans say. I raised my child partially on welfare and know how much it can help, even if it is degrading. It gave me some breathing space and gave me a little bit of dignity. It needs to be fixed, but there must be a safety net. It was degrading, but not as degrading as going out and prostituting yourself. I mean, that's the bottom line.

PLAYBOY: Literally prostituting yourself?

GOLDBERG: Absolutely, because when you are trying to raise a child and you have no job or a chance of a job, there aren't many alternatives. In every system there are people who abuse welfare. But they are not the majority. And they are not all black. And they are not all without education.

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about limits on welfare so people will be required to return to the workforce?

GOLDBERG: I'd be fine with it if there were jobs out there. Most people do not want to sit home. So sure, make people go back to work, but train them and offer them good jobs. Corporations, in exchange for tax breaks, should have to provide training and meaningful child care. Then we can talk. They want to stop abortion, yet they are against sex education? What fucking hypocrisy. Sex education is important. I was very distressed when Joycelyn Elders lost her job. Kids have to know. Would you rather have people masturbate or have abortions? It's the safest sex you can have. Mutual masturbation is the safest sex you can have with somebody else. Oral sex is out. Penetration is out. You've got to be careful. You can get pregnant. You can get sick. So why not teach children about masturbation? They're going to do it anyway.

PLAYBOY: You have raised these issues at the Academy Awards ceremonies. How much free rein do you have?

GOLDBERG: Quite a bit, as you may have noticed.

PLAYBOY: Why did you decline to return for this year's show?

GOLDBERG: I just know that I can't be any better than I was. I learned from the first time, and I don't think I can surpass the second time. There's a lot of pressure.

PLAYBOY: Last year you took on Jesse Jackson, who called for a protest against the program because so few black actors were nominated for awards.

GOLDBERG: Don't get me started.

PLAYBOY: Get started.

GOLDBERG: We've all known and been working with and struggling with the problems Hollywood has with black actors. We knew it much better than he did. Yet I was hosting the awards, Quincy Jones was producing them, black acts such as Stomp were on, so it was the wrong place to complain. Besides, Jackson never asked what we—black actors—thought. But because he said he was boycotting the show, all I said was, g"Since you aren't watching, I ain't going to deal with you." This created a big old stink, too. Ooh, people were so pissed off.

PLAYBOY: When Jackson called for the protest, did you and Jones sit down and discuss what your reaction would be?

GOLDBERG: I was ready to rip him a new behind. But Quincy said that he didn't want me to do anything.

PLAYBOY: We take it that you couldn't help yourself.

GOLDBERG: [*A particularly sweet, innocent smile*] That's right. Listen, Quincy has been fighting this battle for 45, 50 years. Harry

Belafonte has been fighting it for 60 years. Sidney Poitier for years and years. So I just had to quietly deal with it. A lot of people were very angry. They thought I insulted Jackson.

PLAYBOY: And marginalized him.

GOLDBERG: Marginalized him? He basically put me and Quincy in the position of choosing to do this thing we wanted to do and felt was a very positive thing to do, or to stand up alongside him. He put us in the position of looking like we were kissing somebody's ass.

PLAYBOY: Do you agree that black actors were underrepresented in terms of the nominations?

GOLDBERG: Maybe, but not in terms of that show. I mean, it was the wrong show to point to and say that blacks are being blocked from participating in Hollywood. People seem to forget that the mere fact that I'm still here is a huge statement. So is the fact that a lot more people look like me than they did 12 years ago, when I started—I mean, this hair! And I never have to be anybody except who I am. In a previous generation, a black actor might have had to fit a mold. But this is me. These are my lips, my nose, my hair, my butt—spread, un-spread, spread, unspread, depending on the season. I have to hold my temper

PLAYBOY: Is Hollywood still racist? Does it downplay the work of blacks?

GOLDBERG: No. Because if you look at the past five years of the Academy Awards, one or two of us have always been nominated. I have been nominated—what? Twice? And won once. But are things perfect? Hell, no. It ain't perfect in the world.

PLAYBOY: Have you talked with Jackson since then?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yes, yes. He said [*imitating him*] m"Well, you know, we've got to get together." I ain't heard from him since. Yeah, that's Jesse. He's basically full of shit.

PLAYBOY: A character in your Broadway show was a black girl who wanted blonde hair because everyone on TV was blonde. Did you feel that way when you were little?

"You can get pregnant. You can get sick. So why not teach children about masturbation?"

GOLDBERG: I guess I did. When I was growing up, you looked at the back of a magazine and saw the Breck girl. And you just knew it wasn't going to happen. You'd take the magazine to your mother and she would just say, g"Ain't going to happen."

PLAYBOY: Is it fundamentally different for a black girl growing up now?

GOLDBERG: Oh, yeah. I mean, this is very egotistical of me, but look at me: I'm here. I'm here and I'm here in a big way. In little kids' books, in magazines, in movies, on television, on the Academy Awards ceremony, on Star Trek, in reruns forever, God bless them. I am a presence. There was no one until I became a teenager, and then Diahann Carroll came on in a big way with the TV program Julia. Now there are shows with entirely black casts and commercials with black actors.

PLAYBOY: For similar reasons, gays complain that they are portrayed as homicidal maniacs or stereotypical queens. Are you sympathetic?

GOLDBERG: Of course. America has been in the closet for a long time. We are behind in our thinking in so many ways. Sexual revolution or no sexual revolution, the bottom line is that we are still very uncomfortable when it comes to sex. Anything we don't understand, we want to eliminate. But I think people have to recognize that there is nothing you can do to stop people from living their lives. Either adapt or walk away. Move to another place where people will continue to be intolerant. Move to Iran.

PLAYBOY: That's basically what you said to white supremacist Tom Metzger when he appeared on your talk show.

GOLDBERG: That's it. He said that the races should be separate and I said, g"So where are you going, Tom? Because I'm not going anywhere." This is why the immigration issue is making me insane. Immigration is the backbone of this country. Immigrants built America. I look at the last names of a lot of the people who are speaking about the terrible problem with immigration and think, How long ago were you an immigrant?

PLAYBOY: What were the high points of your talk-show experience?

GOLDBERG: Getting to sit down with some wild people—Alexander Haig and asking him, g"So what should I call you? Should I call you 'General'?" "Call me Big Al." Gordon Liddy—talking to him was a hoot! Whatever he is, he's a great conversationalist. We disagree on just about everything. Same with Charlton Heston, but talking to him was a thrill.

PLAYBOY: Didn't he give you a big kiss?

GOLDBERG: Yeah. I asked him if there had been an uproar when he did The Omega Man and had this great interracial kiss with Rosalind Cash. It was one of the first big, swooping smackaroonies that we saw. He said, m"No." Then he leaned closer to me and said, "Are people really upset by that in this day and age?" And I said, "Oh, yeah! I've had them cut out of movies." And he leaned closer and said, "Really?" And I said, "Yeah," and he leaned closer and gave me a big old kiss! And there were other good moments too. I have a tattoo of Woodstock on my breast, and Charles Schulz asked if I wanted him to sign it. It was wonderful. When Tom Metzger was on, he asked for my autograph for his kids.

PLAYBOY: In that case you were criticized for being too nice.

GOLDBERG: My job on that show was to listen. I never said I was going to fight for causes. I knew how I felt, and I thought I was very clear about it. People were angry because they wanted me to voice their opinion. But one of the reasons they yanked the show is that I wouldn't get into fights, wouldn't do a monolog and wouldn't put in a band. The show was about conversation.

PLAYBOY: Would you have had Newt Gingrich on your show?

GOLDBERG: I would have enjoyed the opportunity to talk with Newt Gingrich. I have always said it is hard to take someone named Newt seriously, but this is coming from someone named Whoopi. Gingrich, with his loose-lipped contract, is a small-minded man. Yeah, it would be great if taxes could be cut. I would be so happy if welfare could be eliminated. I would be thrilled, you know, if big business really embraced the country. I would be thrilled if we didn't

need affirmative action. But we do. At least Colin Powell acknowledged the need for affirmative action.

PLAYBOY: Do you admire him as a black leader?

GOLDBERG: He is for a woman's right to choose and for affirmative action—the latter because he knows it works. He backed the wrong horse, though. Clinton really does believe in affirmative action. I wouldn't be here, and neither would any other person of color. Before, it just wasn't working. We have had to take sterner actions to ensure that all Americans get their due. American, not African American. I won't let anyone call me African American.

PLAYBOY: Why not?

GOLDBERG: Because I'm not an African American. I'm purebred, New York raised. I'm not from Africa. Calling me an African American divides us further. It means that I'm not entitled to everything an American is entitled to. My roots go back longer here than a lot of those folks who have nothing in front of g"American." Some of those folks came on the Mayflower, but we were under the Mayflower. We were here. I am just very, very insulted by what that does. I don't have to excuse the fact that I am brown-skinned or black-skinned. I don't have to explain that. I was born here. I am as American as a hot dog. As baseball. [*Laughs*] I can feel the teeth in my ass right now as we're talking [*laughs*] just feel it. Chomp. Chomp. Chomp.

PLAYBOY: Who's chomping?

GOLDBERG: The people who feel they have the divine right of kings to speak for me and every other black person. Fuck g'em.

PLAYBOY: You take on social issues in your annual Comic Relief benefits. After 10 years, how has the experience changed?

GOLDBERG: It's more fun than ever. It's a reunion.

PLAYBOY: Is it occasionally difficult to hold your own in the company of Robin Williams and Billy Crystal?

GOLDBERG: The boys have sort of nurtured me along, and now I've finally come into my own with them. They're a tough duo. They are so fast It took me until three or four years ago to just bust in. They were always really good to me, encouraging me, going, Pow! you're on. I always considered myself the Vanna White of Comic Relief, because I do all the serious stuff the information, the phone numbers. I finally busted loose with them. Now we run wild. These boys are always talking about their genitalia, and I finally said, g"Look. Explain this to me. What is it about your dick? Why are we talking about it, yet again?"

PLAYBOY: You're also on TV commercials now. Did you have qualms about becoming the MCI spokesperson?

GOLDBERG: No, because MCI really does a better job.

PLAYBOY: You sound like a paid flack.

GOLDBERG: They asked me if I wanted to be their spokesperson, and I made them jump through hoops. I said, g"I want to see your paperwork. I want you to prove to me that you are the better company." They did. I believe they are cheaper and their service is better. Having me as their spokesperson actually helped MCI, which I'm kind of proud of. It's why I will speak out for the things I believe in. People seem to listen a little bit. And I do want things to get better.

PLAYBOY: Have they?

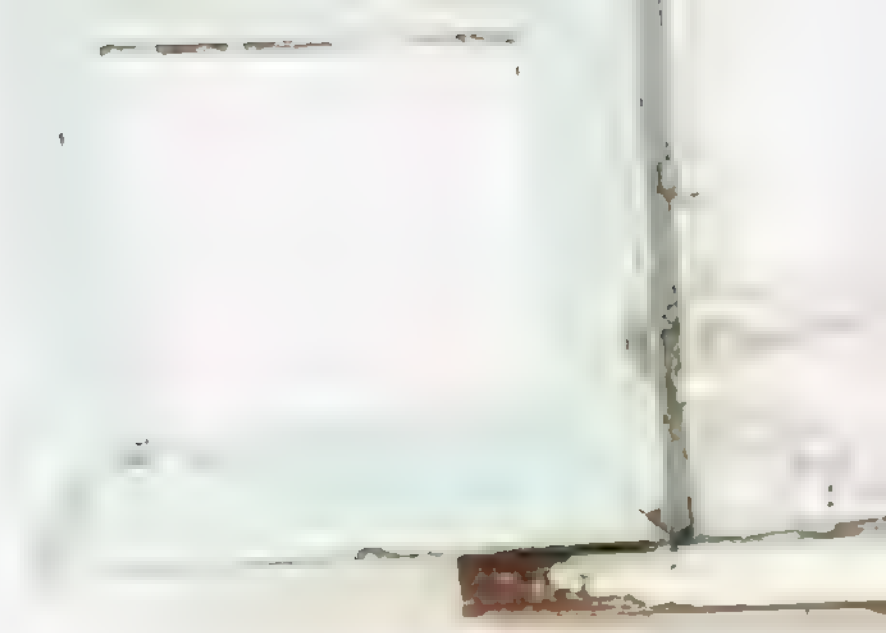
GOLDBERG: Well, things got better and then they got worse. As far as I'm concerned, the Reagan years did more to destroy the fabric of the nation than anything. Dismantling a lot of those programs with no safety net destroyed the morale of folks who were working so hard and struggling so long to make something happen. My daughter would come in from the park and I'd say, g"Well, you're home early," and she'd say, "Yeah, some guy was driving by and shots were flying." I would be in conniptions because I grew up in a time when shooting went on only in the movies. This idea that life doesn't mean anything anymore comes from the top. Treat people as if they matter, care for them, tend them, help them grow up strong, give them good schools, child care, make them feel as if you care about them and show them that they are valued. Then they will be valued and will feel valued. The government has to get in there and roll up its sleeves.

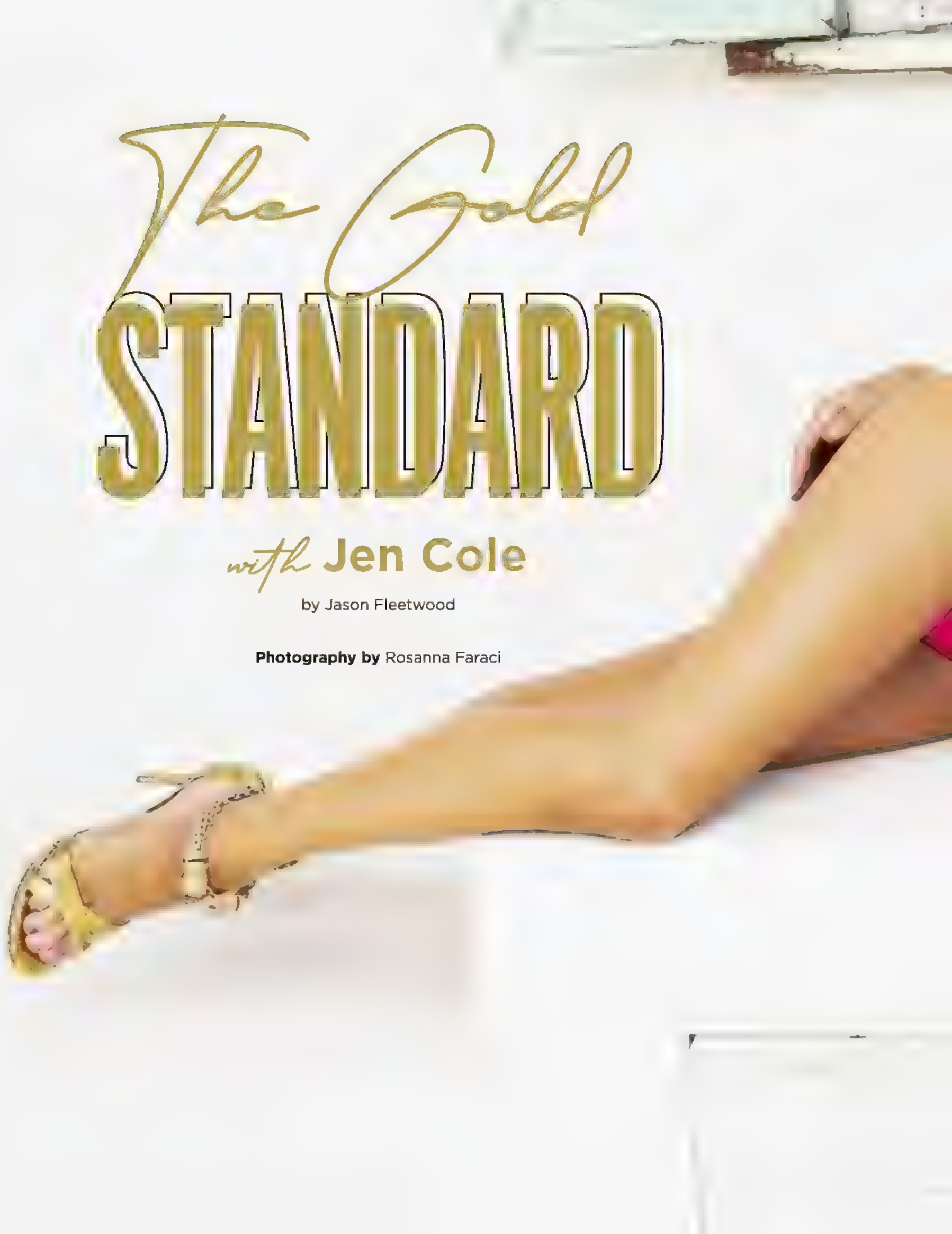
The Gold STANDARD

with Jen Cole

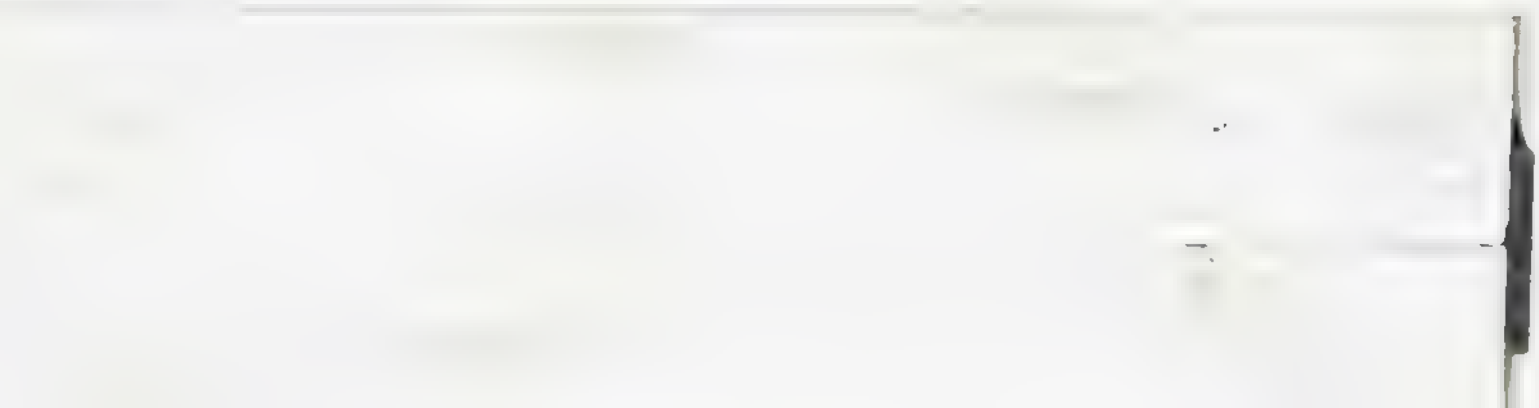
by Jason Fleetwood

Photography by Rosanna Faraci





This month we're super-excited to have the ever-sensual **Jen Cole** grace our pages. There's really no need to mention how utterly attractive she is but behind those picture-perfect good looks is a woman who is so much more. She's smart, creative, loves to express herself and is a complete pro in front of the camera. No person better defines the term 'total package' and we couldn't blame any guy for getting caught daydreaming about her beauty, either lost in thoughts of intrigue our fantasy. Here, we find out what Jen's been up to lately and what she's all about!



"The energy a man can bring can be simply undeniably and surprisingly dom inant, just in the sheer way they carry themselves.

Heya Jen, firstly, welcome to the Playboy family and we're ecstatic to have you. Now, most interviews usually warm up but we're going to dive straight into the good bit... where'd you get those amazing, sultry long legs? Jason after that interlude, driving straight into the good bit is most acceptable. Canadian made, trained as a professional ballerina across the country, made those "long" legs through discipline. Elegance, grace, is beautiful. Add a pair of red bottom heels and lingerie - "sultry" just happens.

Okay, now that's out the way. When you're not working what are some of your absolute favorite things to do? Well, I am a little bit of a wild child, so debauchery just happens.

Your IG is totally gorgeous by the way, out of interest, would you mind sharing your handle with our readers - and why the name J. Cruz? No handle, just me. And I like it.

You've done so much awesome photographic work with a variety of pictures ranging from you being on helicopters, to SNM and handcuffs, and even gracefully posing in front of scenic mountain views. Where do you get all your creative inspiration? Art.

This one's for me... how does glitter taste? #TastyArt... #TastyArt: Taste like who cares, looks like what? Hmmmmm... Right? I was playing around with glitter for a future photograph of glitter on the tongue. It wasn't easy, I got way too into it - or did I? Really. It is just glitter. Ok, so yes in slow motion - it was well, sexual, made me smile. My girlfriends were like, Jeeeeeen? What is that post? I just said it's glitter, for the #TastyArt. Problem?

Beautiful women always have some of the craziest DM stories. What was one of the most random things you've ever found lurking in your inbox? Stalking through the internet and bullying through alias profiles is nothing these days. Fake websites by jealous girls is a given. In the last year this has escalated to stalking, BNE, robbery, being assaulted, GPS tracked and surveillance. Lurking in my inbox doesn't bother me, just not outside my door.

On the topic of guys, what's the most creative, and totally lamest pick-up lines you've ever heard? Most creative pick up ever, well I kept turning this guy down, repeatedly. Then he handed me something when he saw me out. It was a new cellphone with only his number in it. Hmmm... I may or may not have called it. Lamest - no time for that.

For all the 'shy' but good guys out there, what advice do you have for making a good first impression with their crush? I'm unsure there is a simple answer to that. The energy a man can bring can be simply undeniably and surprisingly dominant, just in the sheer way they carry themselves. That is not the start of a girl crush though, it is when this dominant man is a complete gentleman and his strength is overshadowed by warmth. Being a gentleman is really underrated.

Speaking of crushes, do you have a celebrity crush of your own? Banksy. Man of mystery. Visual Protest. He reminds me of a living lego figure. I want to listen to his life story - but make something with it too. Yes, clearly I adore and have a crush on him, maybe Playboy can get him to spray me naked? I can return the favor?

Three things always in your bag... Tom Ford, a photo and a letter.

Chest or guns? Please both and legs. Proportion is key. I love the gym and training - fit that into a suit and 'boom'.

Turnoffs? When a well-dressed man crosses his legs and his socks are tragic, 'cringe'. Details are a must. However, I seem to be attracted to completely different humans. So maybe socks are like a potential project... I would say I am joking but I was not born with a filter.

Your dream holiday destination is... New York.

Biggest fear? Besides Unit 5, the adjacent apartment to mine.

If you had one day to spend one million dollars on yourself, what would you buy and why? Take it all out of the bank in one hundred dollar bills, book a lavish hotel room, dress in the finest lingerie and shoes. Throw it all over the bed and roll around in my million dollar bed. Plus at the end of the day, I did spend it but I also still have it.

Okay, time for some of the deeper stuff. In an ideal world, where do you see yourself in five or ten years; time in terms of family life, career, or both? Life tends to throw me curveballs, so the details I'm not sure of. I will be proud of it though, 5 or 10 years later.

If you had to choose, would you say money and wealth determines success, or is it one's personal achievements and happiness? Money is a must, it is a necessity, the currency for life. Wealth is just an abundance of money. Personal achievements give you pride. While happiness is an emotional state. This is a trick question, you cannot have option B without part of option A. The happiest memories I have are with people and have nothing to do with money. I guess you could say priceless. Why not be happy in nice shoes though?

For all the optimistic hopefuls out there, what words of advice do you have for people working towards reaching their dreams? Listen to 'Vienna' by Billy Joel.

Sadly, all good things must come to an end but it was awesome having you Jen, thanks again and we're wishing you all the best for the future. Who knows, hopefully, we'll be seeing you again, real soon #missjen cole

Playboy Interview

Anita Bryant

A candid conversation about Jews, gays, sex, politics and orange juice with the crusading singer who would show homosexuals the way to salvation

INTERVIEW BY **KEN KELLEY** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **BUD LEE**

Editor's note: Our in-depth interview with singer turned anti-gay-rights crusader Anita Bryant is republished here as it originally appeared in the May 1978 issue of Playboy, warts and all. Considered by some to represent a milestone in the history of homosexuality in America, the interview helped catalyze the fight for gay rights. Journalist Ken Kelley, who was gay but not out at the time, also wrote the companion piece Cruising With Anita.

For her first 36 years, Anita Bryant was the stereotypic embodiment of the American dream; hers was a rags-to-riches saga in the best Horatio Alger tradition. For almost two decades, she'd been reasonably happy with her life: She'd evolved a system that enabled her to pursue both a lucrative career as a popular entertainer and a satisfying private life as a devoted wife and mother. She had a loyal husband, wholesome kids and a cozy home overlooking Miami's Biscayne Bay. Her life was comfortable and distinctly uncontroversial.

Last year, all that suddenly and dramatically changed; her halcyon routine perished in the flames of political warfare. When the Metropolitan Dade County Commission passed an ordinance that would, in effect, mandate that qualified homosexuals be hired as teachers in private and parochial schools, Bryant stepped forward to spearhead a drive to repeal it. The

ensuing campaign was drawn along classic good-versus-evil lines. Bryant recruited a slew of religious leaders and conservative politicos under the banner of her ad hoc organization, Save Our Children. Her pitch was simple: Homosexuality is a sin, and if homosexuals were given carte blanche to glamorize their "deviate lifestyle" in Miami-area classrooms, the American family would be destroyed and the American way of life would disappear. Miami homosexual leaders, armed with a hefty war chest, issued an urgent national SOS to supporters of "human rights"—if Bryant were successful, they said, America would turn into Nazi Germany—and liberals from Midge Costanza to Rod McKuen dutifully trekked to Miami to campaign against her. The national media seized on the issue almost from the start and a local election was turned into a national spectacle. On election day last June, the ordinance was overwhelmingly defeated and Bryant was photographed dancing a jubilant jig. But the battle was far from over; Bryant had become a fixture on the American political scene.

Although she consistently maintains that she was ill prepared to champion a political cause, Bryant admits that she's always known that she was "gifted by the Lord" with a special determination. She made her singing debut at the age of two in a rural Oklahoma Baptist church. That same year—1942—her parents divorced, and, along with her baby sister, Sandra, Bryant moved in with her maternal grandparents. After a short stint in the Service, her father came home and her parents remarried. Her stage debut came in the first grade, when she landed a role in a local high school play. The audience loved her and she loved the applause. At the age of eight, she was singing on a weekly local radio show. That same year, she convinced a preacher to baptize her. (To this day, she calls that moment the most significant one in her life.) Her parents moved the family to Oklahoma City to boost her career chances. By the age of 12, she'd won a local contest and landed her own weekly television show. Shortly thereafter, her father left and her parents divorced again; her deep-seated feelings of hatred for her father were to haunt her for the next 20 years. Her mother continued to encourage her career, and at 13, Bryant cut her first record. The next year, she hopped a plane to Hollywood in the hope of landing a movie contract; she was rejected because a studio mogul decided her big voice didn't fit her tiny body.

Her mother married again and moved the family to Tulsa in 1955 and Bryant enrolled in Will Rogers High School. She sang in the church and school choirs, starred in a local presentation of South Pacific and became a regular on a local TV variety show. She caught the eye of one of Arthur Godfrey's talent scouts, and at 16, she became a favorite on Godfrey's CBS-TV show. That was her big break—her career zoomed ahead with almost breakneck speed. After signing a contract with Carlton Records, she cut her first 1,000,000-seller record, her version of "Till There Was You." She did a series of national tours on bills with pop stars such as Rick Nelson. At the urging of her Oklahoma pals, she entered the Miss Tulsa contest, won and found herself elected both Miss Oklahoma and second runner-up in the 1959 Miss America Pageant. Radio m.c. Don McNeill offered her a slot on his ABC Breakfast Club show, so she moved to Chicago and enrolled as a speech major at Northwestern University. College life did not agree with her and she was very lonely. She met Bob Green, then Miami's top disc jockey, at a record convention and, after his assiduous courtship, she finally agreed to marry him in 1960. The couple moved to Miami Beach and in 1963, after she was told by a gynecologist that she was barren, the Greens adopted a son, Bob, Jr. She disproved her doctor's diagnosis the next year, when her daughter Gloria was born. Five years later, she gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl.

The union of Green and Bryant proved to be financially fertile as well. He became her personal manager and she soon became a much-sought performer at state fairs and conventions. She also became a favorite at advertising agencies—representing Coca-Cola, Holiday Inn, Kraft and, since 1968, the Florida Citrus Commission, as its p"sunshine girl." She traveled for six years on Bob Hope's U.S.O. tours. Lyndon Johnson let it be known that she was his favorite singer. Baptist preachers invited her to deliver Sunday sermons—a rare enough occurrence in that fundamentalist religion. She wrote nine books (including a cookbook) that emphasized the theme of coping with life through faith in Jesus, and they all became 1,000,000 sellers in religious bookstores.

While things seemed rosy on the surface, Bryant had transferred the negative feelings about her father that she admits in this interview to all men—including her husband—and they were threatening her marriage. And when her grandfather and two friends died within months of one another in 1974, she suffered something of a nervous collapse and sought succor in a Christian-therapy group in California. Her stay was a brief one, and out of the experience came another successful book, forgiveness of her father and a new-found devotion to her husband.

It was her husband, in fact, along with her Baptist pastor, who convinced, her to defend motherhood and Christian ideals by taking the stand against the homosexual community last year. She was shocked when most of her bookings evaporated—most booking agents were scared off by the threats of homosexuals to protest her appearances—and she appeared mostly in religious shows, always accompanied by a phalanx of angry gay pickets. She was universally reviled in the national media and by Hollywood and became cannon fodder for comedians everywhere. By her estimate, she lost half a million dollars in bookings. A national "gaycott" of Florida orange juice almost cost her her $100,000-a-year contract with the Florida Citrus Commission, though after a year's waffling, the commission renewed it. She did lose a contract with the Singer company to host her own television show, as well as her perennial job as narrator of the Orange Bowl parade. She also lost her own booking agent, Dick Shack, whose wife, Ruth, ironically enough, Bryant had helped elect to the Dade County Commission—almost immediately after which she sponsored the homosexual rights ordinance that sparked the whole showdown. Bryant insists that she took her stand based on her religious convictions, dollars be damned, and that she'd do it all over again in a minute.

Some replay of her 1977 battle looms on the horizon: After protests from the Save the Children Federation, Bryant changed the name of her organization to Protect America's Children, and that group sends out a newsletter and an organizing kit to a large list of supporters. She has determined that she will lend her efforts to support other struggles to save America from perdition, though she will not do so until she "gets a calling from the Lord" on where to go and what to do. One thing is certain: Bryant will continue to make news for a long time.

Playboy sent free-lancer Ken Kelley (whose previous PLAYBOY credit was the celebrated underground interview with fugitive Abbie Hoffman in May 1976) on an eight-day Bible Belt tour with Bryant and Green. At first, she "prayed to God for guidance" and decided against doing the interview for PLAYBOY, feeling that the nudity that appears in the magazine violated her moral standards. (She regards fornication between unmarried heterosexuals as no less a violation of the Lord's commandments than homosexual conduct.) Kelley continued the interview under assignment to Rolling Stone, but editorial differences developed and, at the end, he was able to persuade Green and Bryant that her startling views could be aired in PLAYBOY, as originally planned.

PLAYBOY: Have you always been obsessed with homosexuality?
BRYANT: Not at all. If I had been, would I have waited until 1977 to speak up? We could have gone on the offense long ago. We would have tried to shut down their publications, which anyone can pick up at a local hotel, and which show that they can do what they want with kids of whatever age they want, and even what kind of sex they can have. The homosexuals have their national directory and it lists Miami as the most open city in the nation. I got involved only because they were asking for special privileges that violated the state law of Florida, not to mention God's law. You know, when I was a child, you didn't even mention the

word homosexual, much less find out what the act was about. You knew it was very bad, but you couldn't imagine what they tried to do, exactly, in terms of one taking a male role and the other taking a female role. I mean, it was too filthy to think about and you had other things to think about. So when I finally found out all the implications, it was a total revelation for me.

PLAYBOY: Then when you opposed the Dade County ordinance, at first you didn't even have a clear idea what you were opposing?

BRYANT: Well, I knew some things, because Bob had told me—he is nine years older and he has taught me a lot of things about sex. He was born in the Bronx and I was raised in the Bible Belt what can I say? I mean, you have visions of, well, now, what can they do as two men in bed or two women in bed? But I didn't really know the nitty-gritty of the thing.

PLAYBOY: Until when?

BRYANT: I'm not going to tell you.

PLAYBOY: Wasn't it when you got a letter in January 1977 with an explicit picture enclosed?

BRYANT: Okay, yeah. And, I mean, I was absolutely appalled. I just couldn't believe it. And then, afterward, a local police sergeant gave a presentation in our church basement with slides and all about child pornography and it shocked our whole congregation. We understood then just how debased the whole thing was. I mean, it's a sin under the laws of God. And sin is like leprosy it starts with just a little speck and you don't even notice or care. You think, That's not going to hurt me, and all of a sudden it begins to spread and you still don't worry until the sores spread to the shoulder and the pus starts oozing, but by then it's too late. God says the wages of sin are death, and one little sin brings on another. The homosexual act is just the beginning of the depravity. It then leads to—what's the word? sadomasochism. It just gets worse as it goes on. You go further and further down the drain and it just becomes so perverted and you get into alcohol and drugs and it's so rotten that many homosexuals end up committing suicide. The worst thing is that these days, so many married men with children who don't have a happy marriage are going into the homosexual bars for satisfaction—if they're not careful, they're going to get caught up in it totally.

"What can I say? I mean, you have visions of, well, now, what can they do as two men in bed or two women in bed?"

PLAYBOY: You believe in a kind of sexual domino theory, then?

BRYANT: Lots of wives and former homosexuals have testified to me about these things.

PLAYBOY: Didn't your biggest shock about homosexuals come when you realized that male homosexuals eat each other's sperm? A Miami reporter briefly quoted you as saying the reason God calls homosexuality an abomination is that homosexuals eat spermatozoa, the building block of blood, so, therefore, homosexuals are swallowing, and presumably digesting, the essence of life?

BRYANT: I did not … um … I did not say that to any reporter. I'm not that stupid.

PLAYBOY: Did you say it to anybody?

BRYANT: I was overheard talking to a reformed homosexual on the phone and I had no idea our conversation would ever get printed. It was a very personal thing and I never dreamed it would get printed. The reporter deceived me. I was very naïve about the media then since then, I've been trained. At that time, I was like a babe among the wolves.

PLAYBOY: But you did say it.

BRYANT: It was a personal thing. I don't want to talk about it.

PLAYBOY: Why not?

BRYANT: Because it's just too gory, too raw for most people to comprehend.

PLAYBOY: You could take this opportunity to explain yourself, rather than let it stand as an overheard conversation.

BRYANT: Well, I was witnessing to this guy, and I didn't let on that I knew he had been a homosexual, and I threw the question at him because I wasn't sure myself and I wanted to find out. I had read about this phenomenon, but I wasn't sure it was true. See, I was at my desk one night and I was reading and studying; it was about one in the morning and when I read about it

PLAYBOY: You mean swallowing sperm?

BRYANT: Yeah, when I read about it, I about fell through my chair. I said, "Oh, God, this can't be true." That was the first time I really knew. I mean, I had seen in writing before what they did in bed, and so forth, but I never knew that they ate the male sperm. I just wanted to fall off the chair. So when this guy called, I wanted to really find out if what I'd read was true. So I said very casually, "Oh, by the way, do you know that homosexuals eat the male sperm?"

PLAYBOY: What did he say?

BRYANT: He said yes.

PLAYBOY: And?

BRYANT: And I still couldn't believe it.

PLAYBOY: Why not?

BRYANT: Well, throughout the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, men are referred to as trees. Even in the Garden of Eden, when God referred to the tree of life, He was talking about the whole spiritual salvation of men, and so forth. And in the New Testament, it says Jesus was called the fruit of the womb—which is very interesting, because even the homosexuals know this. Did you know there is a group in Seattle that calls itself The Fruit Loops?

PLAYBOY: So?

BRYANT: Why do you think the homosexuals are called fruits? It's because they eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of life. God referred to men as trees, and because the homosexuals eat the forbidden fruit, which is male sperm.… There is even a Jockey short called Forbidden Fruit. Very subtle. Did you know that?

PLAYBOY: No. We've heard only of Fruit of the Loom.

BRYANT: You see, I agree with the anti-abortion people that the beginning of life is when the male sperm fertilizes the female egg. The Scriptures talk about John the Baptist jumping in the womb when he was in the presence of the Mother Mary when Jesus was still in the womb, and that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit. That was the beginning of life and I believe that I cannot deny what I know to be true. That's why homosexuality is an abomination of God, because life is so precious to God and it is such a sacred thing when man and woman come together in one flesh and the seed is fertilized—that's the sealing of life, that's the beginning of life. To interfere with that in any way especially the eating of the forbidden fruit, the eating of the sperm—that's why it's such an abomination. I can't deny it. When I discuss this with Christians, it revolts them, especially when they don't know the Bible and cannot see sin in its most hideous forms. You really turn people off when you speak in these blunt terms, and they can't believe I'm saying it. But you have to tell them that it's true. It's there, it's logical and it makes the sin of homosexuality all the more hideous because it's antilife, degenerative.

PLAYBOY: Surely, you must know that the eating of sperm is not confined to homosexuals. In fact, it's quite popular in heterosexual relationships these days.

BRYANT: It's true. I agree with you. The abomination is spreading. Ideally, of course, the relationship between a man and a woman should embody oneness with God—the most natural thing is the reproducing of life and having the first fruits from that oneness together.

PLAYBOY: So sex is only for procreation?

BRYANT: Oh, no. But God created the family to be a picture of perfection. Nothing is perfect, of course, but a woman's giving herself to her husband should try to resemble perfection, just as the husband's protection of his wife should be a love like he loves his own body. How many men do that with their woman? If you could see that bliss as an expression of God's perfection, it would make you yearn to know God.

PLAYBOY: You're saying that sexual intercourse between man and wife is an acknowledgment of God?

BRYANT: Right it's a picture of the Church, in a sense. It's a beautiful thing, ordained of God, meant to be enjoyed and to be pleasurable, not looked on as debased or ungodly or dirty, as so many Christians unfortunately see it. Sex was never meant to be that. God tells us it's like a mystery—he means a coming together that releases the joy you have in that moment of climax when there is a oneness with you and your husband and with God. It's physical, but it becomes spiritual. I've often thought that at that moment, you experience the release and the purity that God meant to be.... Well, it's like the way Christ loves the Church. When you come together, it's like when the Church is brought up to meet Christ in the air, when we will all take on immortality. There is a releasing of all the burdens of the mortal body and such sheer release of joy and oneness—it's almost like floating in the air and you know someday you will be able to meet Christ. I think the reason there's so much promiscuity and so much emphasis on sex these days is because people leave out the spiritual part.

"When I read about it, I about fell through my chair. That was the first time I really knew that they ate the male sperm."

PLAYBOY: Is birth control an abomination against the Lord? Is taking the pill a sin?

BRYANT: No, because the way it's done, you are not wasting the sperm. I've never really gone into this before. I've never had that question asked of me. I do think it's important to realize God's glory when you come together if there's not the oneness of the spirit, soul and body, then there's an imperfection. This whole discussion is so delicate—that's why it's so important that the government and the public schools should not take the responsibility to explain sex to our children it is the province of the parents.

PLAYBOY: Some parents may be less qualified to explain it than educators are.

BRYANT: I don't care, the child should hear it from the parents.

PLAYBOY: Many parents refuse to accept the responsibility. What then?

BRYANT: I know. It's not easy. I don't have all the answers. I know what you're talking about, because my mother and her mother didn't know how to talk about sex

PLAYBOY: Okay, let's get back to deviant sexual practices, as you characterize homosexuality. Why did you decide to oppose the Dade County ordinance last year? You'd never taken a political stand before.

BRYANT: Right, I never had. The basic reason was because I am first and foremost a mother, and I was standing up for my rights as a mother to protect my children after I realized what the threat the homosexuals were posing meant. That's why we called our organization Save Our Children, though we've since been forced to change it to Protect America's Children, because the Save the Children Federation took us to court. The ordinance the homosexuals proposed would have made it mandatory that flaunting homosexuals be hired in both the public and the parochial schools. My children attend a religious school. Freedom of religion is guaranteed by the Constitution, and if you believe that adultery, homosexuality, drunkenness and things like that violate your religious standards, you then have a right to prevent a teacher from standing up in front of your children and promoting sin. We were fighting religious bigotry. What gives the homosexual any more right to stand up in front of children and talk about his sexual preferences than a man who has a great Dane as his lover?

PLAYBOY: Bestiality is just around the corner, then?

BRYANT: Under the proposed ordinance, every sexual deviation would have been legally acceptable among schoolteachers. Right behind the homosexual community in Dade County was a group of prostitutes who were going to initiate similar legislation permitting whores to stand up in front of kids in the classroom and proclaim their sexual deviation and then ply their trade. Ad infinitum. The issue had nothing to do with what people do in the privacy of their bedrooms. If two men or two women live together and don't flaunt their deviant lifestyle, fine. Let them do what they want. But when they try to interfere with my right as a mother to raise my children the way I see fit, then I draw the line. I mean, no one got very excited about the ordinance—no one knew it was an issue, really, it was so secretive. It had passed two readings at the Dade County Commission before we even became aware of it. On the third reading, it would have become law we only had a week and a half to try to stop it. The ordinance sounded very simple—it said there should be no discrimination in the areas of housing, public accommodations and employment. Who wants to discriminate? It's a no-no. But the discrimination they were talking about was not based on race or religion. Homosexuals would have us believe they're born that way, because they're in total darkness and they've never been told any different. But if they're a legitimate minority group, then so are nail biters, dieters, fat people, short people and murderers. Who will be the next in line to ask for special privileges? When it came down to a courtroom hearing, the homosexuals in Dade County said it's not a matter of housing, public accommodations and employment we're already there, they said. Which they definitely are. They said, "The point is that we want to come out of the closet, we want to tell you where we're at and we don't want to lose our jobs because of it." One of the homosexual leaders made a statement before the Community Relations Board. He said he became a homosexual when he was seven years old but that it bothered him that he never had a role model to look up to.

PLAYBOY: Aren't you just resorting to the same kind of argument that Joe McCarthy used in the Fifties against communism? He insisted that Americans could not be exposed to it lest they immediately turn into raving Marxists. Do you think g"flaunting homosexuals," as you put it, will automatically turn America's children into homosexuals?

BRYANT: Of course it's not just an overnight thing. What happens is that the door then opens onto a lot of other things. It may not have an

immediate effect, but certainly down the line it will on your kids and your grandchildren, for generations to come. We can't see the evils of sin right off. It looks so innocent at first, but I've seen too many lives ruined by that kind of thinking.

PLAYBOY: A moment ago, you lumped homosexuals into the same category as murderers.

BRYANT: But I'm not saying homosexuals are murderers.

PLAYBOY: You're saying they're just as bad.

BRYANT: No, I don't say they're as bad. God says it. It's in the Bible. First Corinthians, I think.

PLAYBOY: Since you've never been connected with political causes before, how did you feel when you found yourself embroiled in a controversial issue as its leader?

BRYANT: I was petrified. I was devastated by the fears within me that I would make a fool out of myself. I knew what I was up against the homosexuals in Dade County had amassed support from homosexuals around the country and they had the active backing of a wide range of liberal politicians. I asked myself, what can I possibly do that will matter? But, thanks to the encouragement of my husband and my pastor, I became aware of the difference one person can make. Similar ordinances had been passed in 36 other cities around the country and Congressman Ed Koch [now New York City's mayor] had even proposed a federal bill along the same lines. The homosexuals in Miami knew that Dade County was one of the most liberal counties in the country. They said if they won, it would be a barometer for all of America. I'd really done my homework before I stood up. I went through a lot of anguish.

PLAYBOY: Your pastor convinced you it was a sin not to stand up?

BRYANT: Yes. I was totally convinced of that. My eyes had been opened and I really had no choice. Still, I vacillated between being weak and being strong. Then I told myself, well, if God is before me, who can be against me?

PLAYBOY: You had God on your side?

BRYANT: Yes. I had given the Lord my total being—I mean, everything. So I had a confidence, a strength that everything I had always tried to attain in my own flesh, and never could, would be now possible. When you give yourself to God, God gives you everything. My pastor, Brother Bill, had a much bigger picture than I did. He told me, "I don't know anyone else in the nation who could take a stand like this." He saw that I was the one person who could make a difference. When I finally surrendered to God, I gained a confidence and I've not been afraid since.

PLAYBOY: You weren't afraid when you got the bomb threats?

BRYANT: No.

PLAYBOY: The death threats?

BRYANT: No.

PLAYBOY: How about your children?

BRYANT: They're not afraid because we're not afraid. I'm not afraid for myself, but I am afraid for my children.

PLAYBOY: You must know that the homosexual leaders, as much as they loathe you, nevertheless credit you with helping them publicize their cause. You're saying it was a quid pro quo—that they had the same effect on your cause.

BRYANT: I don't owe anything to them. I owe it all to God, because God pushed me into that corner. I will never give the homosexuals the credit. In fact, the more the homosexuals rant and rave, the more the committed Christians are going to come out of the closet. It's God's plan. I am only his humble servant. I never wanted to be the leader of anything. In fact, knowing what I know now, if I had the choice, I would definitely have chosen the role way back when of just a simple wife and mother.

PLAYBOY: You'd have given up your career?

BRYANT: Yes, definitely, knowing what I know now. It's so much easier to do that than to stand up and rant and rave for your human rights against militant homosexuals.

PLAYBOY: All right, back to Miami. What was your first step when you decided to take a stand?

BRYANT: I wrote a letter to the nine county commissioners, stating my convictions. After I wrote the letter, the homosexual leaders united against me. They called the Florida Citrus Commission and threatened a national boycott of Florida orange juice. The commission was very upset they didn't understand why I was standing up. Then the homosexuals went further they said they'd make me the laughingstock of the country. They said they'd sue my A-S-S off.

It was just a scare tactic—we didn't know if they could follow through with their threats, but it was scary we had never been up against anything like that before. I remember walking around the house for several days, talking to myself, wondering what to do; I'd get real bold one minute and the next minute I'd burst into tears, crying out loud. I was so scared. Anyway, before all of this happened, I'd agreed to go on a local radio station—the disc jockey was a real Christian gal, so I felt pretty safe in her hands. But I was trembling still I had hoped my letter to the county commission was enough. But I decided I had to do the show, to help our cause, and I did it. It was great. I'd brought my daughter Barbara with me, and when we started driving back after the show, there was a drizzly rain. Suddenly, in front of us, there was a car crash. It was a real bad accident. I swerved around it, and to this day, I don't know how we escaped death. We were real shook up. I pulled over to the side of the road and I said to Barbara, "Let's just pray. Let's thank Jesus for saving us from this accident." I took her hand and we prayed Barbara is like me. I mean, when she was born, she was 42 years old. She looked up at me and said, "If God can help us like this, can't he help you win against the homosexuals?" I tell you, my tears started coming and I knew then we would win.

PLAYBOY: Did Barbara understand what homosexual meant? She's nine years old. Had you discussed the issue explicitly with your children?

BRYANT: Yes. We had to talk with them in very practical terms on their age level.

PLAYBOY: How do you explain homosexuality to a nine-year-old?

BRYANT: Well, now you've got me on the spot. Basically, we explained to our children that marriage is a sacred vow and that in Genesis, God said he knew man was incomplete and man needed a helpmate, so God made woman, and that man and woman were meant to come together and multiply the earth. I explained in simple terms to the little ones that some men try to do with other men what men and women do to produce babies; and that homosexuality is a perversion of a very natural thing that God said was good, and that it is a sin and very unnatural. I explained to the children that even barnyard animals don't do what homosexuals do.

PLAYBOY: That's simply untrue. There is a lot of evidence proving not only that barnyard animals do engage in homosexuality but that in many primitive human cultures around the world, homosexuality is and has been institutionalized as part of tribal culture.

BRYANT: Well, I've never heard of it. The point is that God says it's an abomination of nature and it's wrong.

PLAYBOY: That's a different point we're saying that among various species, human and animal, it is a common occurrence.

BRYANT: That still doesn't make it right.

PLAYBOY: What if, despite your efforts, one of your kids turned out to be a homosexual? Would you disown him or her?

BRYANT: I would never disown my children, no matter what. I'm a firm believer in taking my children in my arms every day and saying g"I love you" every day. I have a real bugaboo myself if I fail as a mother to my children, then I have failed completely. My family is my first priority. If one of my kids chose the homosexual lifestyle, I would sit down and explain to him that he's hurting no one but himself and that God cannot tolerate that kind of sin in his life and that lie will have to suffer the consequences of sin, particularly in knowing that he will

never be happy choosing the way of the Devil rather than God's way.

PLAYBOY: But you would regard yourself as a failure if that happened?

BRYANT: Yes. If my kids don't become happy, worthwhile, responsible citizens, then I will have failed everything. All else will have been in vain—the career, everything. Nothing else really matters.

PLAYBOY: Were there particular problems with your children after you took your anti-homosexual stance?

BRYANT: There was one point where our daughters, Gloria and Barbara, told me that they didn't want to hold hands with their little girlfriends anymore. They were afraid people would think they were homosexuals. I had to sit down and talk to them—I told them in very practical terms that that had nothing to do with homosexuality. And then I talked to our other kids, individually, to make sure their views in regard to their friends weren't warped. You know how kids are—they tease kids who have effeminate qualities. They harass them.

PLAYBOY: You told your children it was wrong to harass boys who were effeminate?

BRYANT: Absolutely. I've taken great pains with the children to educate them that that kind of thing is not Christian. But kids are influenced by their peers; all of a sudden, they get very brave when they're with other kids. My kids aren't perfect—they might resort to that. Kids have a tendency to call each other queer or weird. We've stopped our kids from saying that, I think, through careful explanation of how wrong it is to do that. I think our kids are much more careful about that kind of thing, because they know the harm they can cause, especially in that the accusations can be false accusations. The militant homosexuals in Miami accused us of printing a Kill a Queer for Christ bumper sticker. I mean, never would we endorse that kind of thing. That would be disrespectful to homosexuals as human beings. We would never say "queer" or "faggot" I mean, "homos" is not that bad, really, but we would never say it. And that's a much more honest position than the militant homosexuals take

"If homosexuals are a legitimate minority group, so are nail biters, dieters, fat people, short people and murderers."

I have no respect for homosexuals who insist that their deviant lifestyle is normal. We pray for them, we try to lead them out of it—that's more honest than the stance of saying what they do is normal. I mean, you ask them, "What is your role in the sex act is it male or female?" They say, "Well, sometimes it's male, sometimes it's female." Isn't that play acting? Is play acting normal? Let's clarify the issue of what constitutes a homosexual. I think a lot of parents pass down to their kids a misconception if a boy doesn't have masculine muscles and he doesn't go out for sports, that doesn't make him a sissy or a queer. I don't think a homosexual is a homosexual until he commits the act. I mean, just because a child fantasizes about another man—lots of psychiatrists claim that it's the latent homosexuality expressing itself in the brain of a little one. That's garbage. It's not a physical problem, it's a spiritual one. Just because this kind of kid has certain characteristics that make him different when he's growing up, and he was laughed at or mocked by other kids, that doesn't make him a homosexual, any more than it makes me a grandmother.

PLAYBOY: So a homosexual is not a homosexual until he commits a physical homosexual act?

BRYANT: That's what I consider a homosexual to be. I don't think that if you have fantasies or dreams or whatever counts. No matter if your father or your mother rejected you, no matter what happened in your life, still, it's a matter of choice in a context.

PLAYBOY: As far back as 1948, Dr. Alfred Kinsey showed that, from his research, two out of every five American males had committed a homosexual act. You've heard of his research, we assume.

BRYANT: Not that much, no. But, of course, we know where he was coming from, personally.

PLAYBOY: What does that mean?

BRYANT: Well, I mean, he had no spiritual beliefs, no religious beliefs.

PLAYBOY: Nevertheless, as a social scientist, Kinsey claimed that 37 percent of the American male population—and this was in the late Forties—had committed at least one homosexual act.

BRYANT: But that doesn't mean they were homosexuals.

PLAYBOY: But wait, just a moment ago, you said that committing the homosexual act defined the homosexual being.

BRYANT: Well, one or two acts don't make you a practicing, full-fledged homosexual.

PLAYBOY: You said precisely that.

BRYANT: Yeah, I did say the sex act constitutes.... Look, what I'm saying is that people experiment they may do it a couple of times. It doesn't mean they are practicing homosexuals for life. Some people will try it out just for the kicks—out of curiosity. They can still be forgiven for that sin.

PLAYBOY: In your most recent book, The Anita Bryant Story, you say that you don't know what causes homosexuality. Don't you think you should have studied its causes?

BRYANT: You see, that's the whole thing—the militant homosexuals contend that they are born homosexual and that it's a natural thing. All I know is that God condemns it as unnatural. That's why I insist on saying g"homosexual" and "so-called gay" The word gay totally belies the homosexual lifestyle. I don't even know how the word gay was attached to the homosexual lifestyle. The militant homosexuals took the word and with the power that they have, they programed it into our modern vocabulary. That in itself is a frightening example of what they can do to a society how they can brainwash you into using their terminology. It's a matter of habits. It's like most homosexuals, when they go into the deviant lifestyle, they don't take on the effeminate affectations until they have become part of the homosexual community—they go almost into camp, that's what it is, and they take on those roles whether male or female. It's a learned pattern—so it can be unlearned. That's why it's so dangerous—I think it is so difficult to unlearn because it becomes natural after a while, and they don't have to think about it.

PLAYBOY: What about bisexuality? Is it as great a sin as homosexuality?

BRYANT: Because homosexuality is an abomination, whether you do it once a month or it becomes a lifestyle, when it becomes harder for you to come out of it

PLAYBOY: So is there more hope for salvation for bisexuals?

BRYANT: I can't say there's more hope for them. It's a dangerous place to be, because they're in a promiscuous area. They're committing fornication and homosexuality as well sin. It's almost as if those

people are playing with it. They think, g"I'm not really a homosexual, I don't do it that often." They don't really want to align themselves with the depravity of the homosexual community, per se. They're enjoying their cake but not eating it, you see.

PLAYBOY: Let's return to the Dade County ordinance for a moment. What were the immediate consequences of your standing up against it?

BRYANT: Threats, blackmail, boycotts, intimidation. I won't say who, but someone threatened our business manager in New York that if we continued with the campaign, he would start the rumor that Bob was a former homosexual.

PLAYBOY: Was he?

BRYANT: Of course not. But during the time of the referendum, we lost 70 percent of our bookings. You've got to remember that, predominantly, I'm a variety artist and the bulk of my income comes from performing—Florida Citrus is only a small part. We had no conventions in 1977 and I had been one of the top convention entertainers in the country. I did a grand total of two state fairs in 1977.

The militant homosexuals will go to any extreme to try to get me out of my livelihood. In New Orleans, they went to the manager of the New Orleans Pops orchestra and tried to prove to him that I had been responsible for local homosexual suicides. Every place I go, there are bomb threats. Every place we go, they send half a dozen people from other towns and they come a week before and organize a protest against me. We were really surprised that they had the power to do what they do. It's not the democratic way at all—if we had lost, we would have said, well, we feel bad, but that's it. Well, they lose and they punish you for winning. I had no idea of the viciousness or vindictiveness of the homosexual community. I was very naive in that respect.

PLAYBOY: Any regrets? Would you do it all over again?

BRYANT: I would still stand, I would still make the same choice. I might change some of the statements that were made that were not mine, but unfortunately, that's part of what you have to go through when you're working with people from all walks of life who are part of your organization. It hasn't been easy. I don't think anybody wants to see his livelihood stripped away from him, and you've got to come to grips with the threats to your family—that's something you'd never ask for; you'd have to be crazy to ask for it. But we also got to work with some wonderful people. Seventy percent of the Jewish rabbis supported us, as well as the majority of the black community. That was a wonderful experience.

PLAYBOY: What did you think when the Florida Citrus Commission renewed its contract with you?

BRYANT: I thought it was a courageous thing to do and, of course, I was very glad.

PLAYBOY: Is the tide now turning on your behalf? Your contract was renewed, you were named Most Admired Woman by readers of Good Housekeeping and liberal columnists such as Nat Hentoff have come out defending your right of free speech.

BRYANT: It's too early to say, and I don't know what the homosexuals still have up their sleeve. They are very desperate people who will stop at nothing.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel any responsibility for homosexual suicides? Or for the murder of homosexuals? There was a lawsuit filed against you in San Francisco last year, later dismissed, that charged you with creating a homophobic hysteria that resulted in the murder of a young homosexual

BRYANT: Yes, that's true. But I had nothing to do with any murders. There is a homosexual murder every day in San Francisco. It made me sad and it shocked me that anyone would think I had anything to do with it, but my conscience is clear. I can't be responsible for how people react to what happened in Dade County. My stand was not taken out of homophobia but out of love for them. Look, I'm not as stupid as people make me out to be, especially concerning homosexuality. In Richmond, four of them came up to me. One of them gave me the record Hurricane Anita and looked at me like he was waiting for me to faint dead away or turn pale, and I said I was familiar with it, and I wrote down a Scripture and said, "I love you." And one other guy came on real strong and he said, "You've broken my heart and I cry all night and day because you hate us." I said, "I don't hate you, I love you." I took his hand and said, "I love you; can you say you love me?" This guy started shaking. He said, "I can't say that."

PLAYBOY: That record is just one of the satiric attacks made upon you. There have been more Anita Bryant jokes than Polish jokes in the past year. Rod McKuen said—

BRYANT: He's really a … nothing.

PLAYBOY: People like Johnny Carson and Bob Hope and Martha Raye have also made jokes about you.

BRYANT: Right, and I really was hurt by them. I mean, I could tell you stories from being on U.S.O. tours with Bob Hope and Martha Raye that would make your hair stand on end, but I won't. Yet they attack me. I asked my son Bobby one day about it and he said, "Well, they have a lot of jokes around school about you."

PLAYBOY: Dirty jokes?

BRYANT: No, funny ones. And he said, "They don't bug me."

PLAYBOY: What other kinds of repercussions did you suffer from the so-called gaycott of you?

BRYANT: Well, I couldn't get booked on virtually any of the talk shows, where I'd always been welcomed before. And I recorded a song called "There's Nothing Like the Love Between a Woman and a Man," a real upbeat, down-home country tune. All the record companies agreed it was great, but none of them wanted to risk putting it out.

PLAYBOY: In some jurisdictions, homosexual behavior is now prosecuted as a misdemeanor. Are you in favor of returning it to a felony status?

BRYANT: Yes, I think so. Any time you water down the law, it just makes it easier for immorality to become tolerated.

PLAYBOY: Let's say two adult men are caught in bed, fornicating. Under felony provisions, they could be sent to jail for 20 years. Do you think 20 years in prison would rehabilitate them?

BRYANT: Why make it easy for them? I think it only helps to condone it and to make it easier for kids who wouldn't be so concerned if it were just a misdemeanor, whereas a felony might make them think twice, especially the younger ones.

PLAYBOY: What if it doesn't? Boys should spend 20 years in jail for one act?

BRYANT: If they're on good behavior and everything, and they really

PLAYBOY: What are you saying—that someone will be rehabilitated and turned away from homosexuality in prison? Surely, you know that

"Jesus spoke about adultery and fornication. He was very plain on it. Jesus never wavered from sin one iota."

prisoners are gang-raped routinely. Someone jailed on a homosexual charge is particularly vulnerable. You must know that.

BRYANT: They'll have plenty of time to think. Just because prisons are corrupt and not doing the right job in rehabilitation because they don't have enough spiritual emphasis doesn't mean that there should not be a strong punishment for that.

PLAYBOY: Does punishment lead to redemption?

BRYANT: It's in the Bible

PLAYBOY: Twenty years in jail?

BRYANT: Well, there's no easy answer and I'm sure we don't have all the answers.

PLAYBOY: You're avoiding the question, not just the answer. To stick a kid in jail for committing a homosexual act would seem to most people the greater crime—and sin. If anything were going to reinforce his homosexuality, it would be prison

BRYANT: But, you see, if there are no consequences for any kind of sin, if there's no law and order, if there's no price to be paid for—

PLAYBOY: But you're advocating making homosexuality a felony. The price would certainly exceed the g"crime," if you had your way.

BRYANT: Are you saying do away with the law totally? Look, I'm just thinking of a deterrent to keep young people from going into it. That's why you've got the ministry in the prisons. They're trying to find an answer there. Maybe the answer is to put the homosexuals in a different place in the prison.

PLAYBOY: That's already the case; do you think that would deter them from homosexuality? How familiar are you with prisons? Have you ever performed inside one?

BRYANT: Yes, I did the Huntsville Prison Rodeo. It was great—the audience was very captive. [*Laughs*]

PLAYBOY: Did you get a firsthand look at the prison conditions?

BRYANT: No, I've read about them and I have mixed feelings, because I've heard a lot of radical people who come out and say the prisons are terrible, but you know where they're coming from—they want to do away with law and order because they're rebellious against God. I know what the cause of the prisons is. The cause is sin.

PLAYBOY: So for one sin, the sin of one man making love to another man, you would send them to jail? That's the Christian approach?

BRYANT: As a Christian, I know the only answer is the Gospel.

PLAYBOY: And you would set it up so that the Gospel you advocate would be preached to imprisoned human beings surrounded by the very crime you accuse them of.

BRYANT: All right, you have a point. Especially when you put it in terms of kids; I would like to be working with them to save them from their sins

PLAYBOY: Let's explore some of your theological beliefs. For instance, nowhere in the New Testament does Jesus make any statement about homosexuality.

BRYANT: Well, Jesus did. He spoke about adultery and fornication.

PLAYBOY: But you didn't conduct a campaign against heterosexual swingers' teaching your kids. The fact remains that Jesus never even mentioned homosexuality and virtually every reference to it is in the Old Testament.

BRYANT: But he talked about fornication and he said, g"If you love me, you'll keep my commandments." He was very plain on it. Jesus never wavered from sin one iota. To say that Jesus wasn't against sin is ridiculous. A lot of people who want to interpret the Bible for their own ends, such as the so-called Metropolitan Community Church, ignore parts of it to condone their immoral lifestyle. They make a sham of everything Jesus stood for. If he was not truly the Son of God, then he's just ... nothing. It sounds like it's contradicting itself, but when you read the whole Bible, all of it together, then you understand why at certain points it seems like it's contradicting, but yet it's not. God is simply trying to explain the truth

PLAYBOY: When did you come to that realization? When did you first sit down and read the Bible from cover to cover?

BRYANT: I never have. I have tried.

PLAYBOY: That's surprising.

BRYANT: See, I never went to a Catholic or a Baptist school where they made us do that.

PLAYBOY: Why haven't you read it on your own?

BRYANT: I don't know. Why did you ask me that? I just learned to love the Bible and read it and I read it all the time. But I've never had the time to read it from cover to cover.

PLAYBOY: What is your interpretation of heaven?

BRYANT: The Bible describes heaven as a place where there'll be no sorrow, no tears nor sin. No day and no night; a continuous joy and peace. I've been so high with the Lord that I believe I've had a foretaste of glory divine, of what it's going to be like to not have to put up with pressure and hassles from the physical body. There will be no temptation from the Devil, no evil thoughts will enter your head. I won't have to worry about a schedule, I won't have to live by my little black book, I won't have to write everything down, I won't have to be interviewed. I won't have to sing unless I feel like it. God talks about heaven in a very literal way. He says the streets are paved with gold, a pure gold, and he talks about the pearly gates—it'll be pure pearl. I believe it will literally have those things that are described; that's why it was described that way. A lot of the Bible I take literally.

PLAYBOY: And hell?

BRYANT: That is a place God did not make for mankind—he made that as a place for the Devil, a place he could put him because he was the maestro of music in heaven, and he betrayed God. God created hell to pass Lucifer down into it. In the meantime, he let him become friends of this world, and that's why we have to suffer a spiritual warfare until he comes back for His own.

PLAYBOY: Do you believe in purgatory?

BRYANT: No.

PLAYBOY: All or nothing, then. How does the Devil tempt Anita Bryant?

BRYANT: Through my kids, my husband, just getting on my nerves; my family is where I'm most vulnerable. If I get really tired, I can put my garbage on Bob very easily. Not like before—we used to really fight.

PLAYBOY: But how does the Devil get to you?

BRYANT: Like he gets to anybody. I know the days when I am so beaten down I can see 12 demons around me with billy clubs on my head and I know they're there and I verbally cast them out. I say, g"Satan, get thee behind me." I mean, you can't let clown your guard for a moment. You simply have to remember that God is your best friend and know the peace God can give you when you're in the flow of the stream of his wisdom and love. It's like they call me Hurricane Anita—the Weather Service sent me a letter telling me the name had been picked out 10 years ago, for the storm that hit last spring. It was so weird, the timing. I just thought it was another of God's jokes. He has such a sense of humor, he really does, you know. So some Weather Service people sent me a picture of the hurricane and in the middle of all this turmoil is a perfect eye of stillness. That's me, in the center.

PLAYBOY: You often quote Leviticus and Deuteronomy—the g"lawbooks" of the Old Testament—to support your beliefs against homosexuality. But the Bible is so ambiguous that people on fundamentally different sides can quote it against each other to support their positions.

BRYANT: There were certain things in the Old Testament that you had to do in order to be clean and righteous. Yet when Jesus came, he fulfilled the law. In other words, it's not the Ten Commandments that save you, it's the fact that Jesus died on the cross that saves you. You are not bound by all the things that it says to do in the Old Testament.

PLAYBOY: So you pick the ones that suit you?

BRYANT: Jesus was the fulfillment. He told us we were not to be con-

cerned by the things the Old Testament said — that kind of thing—again.

PLAYBOY: Yet you consistently quote the Old Testament as a justification for your positions, particularly regarding homosexuality. It reminds us of the Scopes trial in Tennessee in 1925, when William Jennings Bryan insisted on a literal interpretation of the creation.

BRYANT: Well, when you start nitpicking, when we try in our own feeble minds to understand God … God says, g"My thoughts are not your thoughts." There's no way you can comprehend what creation is. You're trying to come to a logical conclusion as to how God did it and there's no way we can know how God did it. From man's point of view, miracles never happen. From God's point of view, they do.

PLAYBOY: Does there have to be a conflict between belief in evolution and belief in God?

BRYANT: Except that Darwin did not believe in God.

PLAYBOY: That doesn't answer the question.

BRYANT: Look, because of his atheistic influence, Darwin is taught in the public schools as fact. That's fine, if people want to believe that, but I say we must also put Genesis and the Bible in the school teachings as an alternate belief. And, look, really, there's no way I can answer your question, because I don't know how God did it. I just believe he did it. It's like when Moses parted the Red Sea. To man, that was an impossible feat, yet it was one of the great miracles of the Bible when Moses lifted his rod again and the sea closed. I mean, it boggles your mind to think of the majesty and supernatural power it took to do that. My pastor put it this way: He said, for God, it took only the flick of his pinkie to part the Red Sea.

PLAYBOY: God has a pinkie?

BRYANT: Oh, I don't know, it's just an illustration. Actually, the biggest miracle of all was the constraint God showed not to split the earth in half when he parted the Red Sea. What I'm saying is that God didn't have to do things man's way. He spoke the universe into existence.

PLAYBOY: But even from your point of view, is it not still a miracle to create the universe over a period of billions of years?

BRYANT: Why would he take that kind of time? He doesn't have to

PLAYBOY: Why not? If he is eternal, time is nothing to him.

BRYANT: Well, that's true … but the Bible says God just spoke the universe into existence.

PLAYBOY: Many Biblical scholars aren't nearly as fundamentalist as you are in believing such things.

BRYANT: I don't know! What do I know? We'll know those answers when we get to heaven, all right? And you can ask God yourself!

PLAYBOY: Do you think that people who either don't believe in Jesus as God — Jews, for example—or those who have never been exposed to Christian teaching are condemned to hell?

BRYANT: Well, I personally have to believe that, because I believe God's word. I didn't write the Bible, and that's what the Bible says. But there are a lot of Jews today who are accepting Jesus as the Messiah.

PLAYBOY: What about those who are not — the vast majority, in other words?

BRYANT: You're putting me on the spot again. As much as I would like to say other people can be saved by some other means than Jesus, I cannot deny what I know from the Bible. It doesn't make me feel good or give me any gratification to think someone's going to hell. I have great respect for my Jewish brothers. But I am what I am, I believe what I believe and I can't stick my head in the ground and say, "Well, I believe if people are really good and if they live by other standards, they can get absolved" — God just didn't say that. This whole question is very hard for me, because I have come to love Rabbi Weberman and the other Jewish people I have worked with in Dade County very much. I have a great respect for them, so I don't think in terms of hell-fire and damnation.

PLAYBOY: Presumably, you feel the same way about other faiths—the Moslem faith, for instance.

BRYANT: God is using so many people all over the world to get the Gospel to the Moslems, to everybody. Whether a person will accept or reject the Gospel is between him and God. I'm not responsible for that. I mean, God could just have made us all into robots, but he took a chance. He wanted us to choose his way.

PLAYBOY: If you tried to tell a devout Moslem about Jesus as savior, he would be just as immune to hearing your message as you would be if he tried to tell you Mohammed was the Prophet.

BRYANT: I don't have the answer for that. I can't approach it from an intellectual point of view. There's a lot of things I don't understand about God

PLAYBOY: Where is your sense of justice? If someone truly lives a good life, if he's sincere and moral, just because he doesn't believe in Jesus—

BRYANT: Even though he is sincere, he is sincerely wrong. Sincerity doesn't make you right. The homosexual community believes it's sincerely right too.

> "The press has placed me in a stereotyped box. I'm not a prude, but that's the image they want to portray."

PLAYBOY: What about some Pygmy or some South American Indian who has literally never heard of Jesus and never will, who has his own set of gods that he's worshiped for thousands of years? He's going to hell too?

BRYANT: That's all the more reason we have the responsibility to pay for missionaries to get the truth to them. I mean, I've heard weird stories all over the world about where missionaries have gone to odd places and where people have been saved just by seeing a torn page of the Bible on the floor. There are some weird salvation experiences all over the world. I believe that it's God's plan that all should be saved.

PLAYBOY: But, according to your way of thinking, Jews, Moslems, Pygmies, Eskimos and atheists are going to hell.

BRYANT: According to God's word, they do. I mean, if there's no heaven and no hell, what are we talking about? You know, your problem is that you have to have all the answers. It's impossible to have all the answers!

PLAYBOY: How do you feel about the inferior status conferred on women in the Bible? Would you agree, as some women do, that it's because the Bible was written by men in the context of the times?

BRYANT: Well, no, men didn't write it, the Holy Spirit did. Most of the preachers are men, though, and I think that's brought about an unhealthy balance. It's a thing where you hear so much about g"women, submit yourselves to your husbands," and that is Biblical, where women must submit first but it also says, "submit yourselves one to another." It has to be a submission of both women to men and men to women.

PLAYBOY: But you've also said that women are weaker vessels than men.

BRYANT: Well, they are. I don't think that has a bad connotation.

PLAYBOY: Weak isn't exactly a complimentary term

BRYANT: Well, it's a Biblical term, you see…. All I know is God did have a plan. I don't always want to agree with it and I don't always understand it, but it's like the clay trying to understand the potter. All I

know is that he did set the man over the woman When he said we were to become as one flesh, he meant it in all ways. So if I don't submit to Bob—

PLAYBOY: Why shouldn't he have to submit to you first?

BRYANT: I believe that it's easier for the woman to submit. That's Biblical

PLAYBOY: Why?

BRYANT: I don't know, but I just think that a woman has the capability of submitting. I really thought in my younger days that I could do anything that Bob could do and probably better, and for a time, maybe I showed that I could. But I had a limit. I could take only so much, whereas God has equipped men to take much more responsibility—he made them to be the head and he gave them a certain ability. Women come at things with a much more emotional point of view.

PLAYBOY: What do you mean, emotional?

BRYANT: I can't explain it. I just think women have a softer approach. We're more vulnerable, just like in the Garden of Eden. Bob has an ability to see things from a totally different perspective than I. I am much more trusting. Women are vulnerable as far as people are concerned, whereas men can see through things. Of course, I'm talking about the perfect specimen—everybody's different. But I believe there is an innate ability that men have that's different from women's. I think women have much more of a capacity for pain, for instance—no question there. I've seen it time and time again. I know I have much more endurance than Bob in many areas, and yet for decisions and responsibilities, I got into an awful lot of trouble by taking on more than I was able to handle, and when Bob finally saw that, he took the responsibility for that and it was a tremendous burden lifted off my shoulders.

PLAYBOY: If Bob told you to do something right now that was against the grain of your thought, would you simply submit to him?

BRYANT: I might rebel against it and I have many times—but, Biblically, I would submit, yes.

PLAYBOY: You've gone against your own better judgment?

BRYANT: Oh, yes. For me to learn to submit was one of the most difficult things in the world, because from the time I was a little child, I was a very hardheaded, independent human being. Yet God showed me my weaknesses, showed me where I was the weaker vessel in many respects, and I still didn't want to recognize that. It was in real submission, when I was able to let Bob take over, that I really realized I was usurping his authority by not allowing him to be the person God meant him to be. Submission really means to throw oneself under, so the decision an equal person has to make is to become the one underneath, and that's a matter of choice. Jesus Christ is a terrific example of one who submitted. And either he was who he said he was or he was the greatest liar ever on the face of this earth.

I am not intimidated by being called the weaker vessel, because I know that in many areas I am the stronger vessel. I mean, for a long time, I really would have been in agreement with the feminist movement, particularly for the anger I had toward my father that I transferred to Bob. I usurped Bob's authority in many ways for many years and our marriage was rocky, really rocky, until I recognized I was in rebellion against God, and I got right and submitted. I'm not saying it was easy. I've read some of the feminist materials these days, and some of them get so uptight when the Bible refers to "man" when God talks about the individual, but there was much discrimination in the Jewish heritage against the woman, so when Jesus Christ came, he freed them and made them equal spiritually. Now, we all know there's a tremendous difference between men and women, but we have different roles. It really bothers me that these feminists get so uptight they have this attitude. It's so rebellious, not only against God but against man. You can tell they hate men and they hate even the word of God—they want to change the word of God.

PLAYBOY: You mentioned your anger toward your father. Let's talk about your upbringing. For instance, most people would be surprised to learn that the first liquid to enter Anita Bryant's throat was a slug of corn-mash moonshine.

BRYANT: Yeah, it's kind of ironic, isn't it? You see, I was born dead. My mother was visiting her parents, my Grandma and Grandpa Berry, and I was a month late in coming. When I came, somehow my mother's system had filled up with poison and I was all black and blue and not breathing. My grandfather was not yet a Christian and he picked up the doctor and said, "You blankety-blank son of a you-know-what, either you save my daughter and my granddaughter or I'll kill you." Well, the doctor sort of had to go along. He told Grandma Berry, "All right, get me a pan of ice water and some whiskey and make a strong pot of real thick coffee as black as you can make it." Then he stuck my head in the water and that shocked me into gasping for breath, and Grandma got the whiskey and they got that down me. I vomited and filled a big pan full of black-green poison. I shrank from nine pounds down to a tiny thing—and that's how I came into the world. I was born in my Uncle Luther Berry's bed—that's prophetic, you see, because he's a Baptist minister.

PLAYBOY: You recovered from birth trauma sufficiently that you were able to make your singing debut at the age of two, though?

BRYANT: Yeah, Grandpa Berry felt I was his special grandchild. When I was six months old, he'd rock me in his arms and say, "Sing, Anita, sing!" and I'd yell back to him. So when I was two, he bribed a preacher in the church to let me sing "Jesus Loves Me" or at least he nagged him to death. And people who would come over to the house, I'd set them down and say, "Do you want me to sing for you?" I was a brash kid, real ornery. Grandpa used to call me the brave one, because one time during a tornado, I went rushing out of the house after a washtub that was rolling down the street and he had to rescue me. Later on, when I was learning to ride horses bareback, I'd get thrown 50 feet and get back up and try again, and so the neighbors would call me brave, too. I didn't think I was so brave.

PLAYBOY: Were you a happy child?

BRYANT: You have to remember that my parents were first divorced when I was two years old and a lot of my insecurities started then. Mother had to go to work and I had to live with my relatives, and that affects a child greatly. They had married very young and they really had no idea of the responsibilities of marriage. I had lots of nightmares after the divorce and I walked in my sleep. I was a very hyperactive kid and a very sickly child. I caught everything that came around. I had the measles, the chicken pox and every disease I had was like the worst in medical history. I was anemic and had worms. I had pneumonia about eight times. We didn't have the money to go to the doctor every time I was sick, so it wasn't until much later that I found out that I was a highly allergic person. Even today, I can't take certain foods—I eat beans and I itch all night long. I'm allergic to dust lots of things. And nobody in rural Oklahoma knew anything about nutrition, so my meals were imbalanced. I was raised on fried quail, frogs' legs, wild rabbit, squirrel, venison—stuff my dad or grandpa would hunt. I do remember parts of my childhood as being happy and other parts I've blocked out because it hurts too much. I guess I was happiest when I was eight years old and my parents were remarried, and I was baptized and came to know Christ as my personal savior.

Most of my life, I've been a real go-getter, the original Unsinkable Molly Brown. I've been down but never out. Even when I was very young I was determined to be a star. I told the Lord, "Lord, let me be a star." I was a strong-minded, independent kid. Remember we were really living in the sticks. There was only one television in the neighborhood, and on Saturday nights we'd go over and watch it. I remember the first show I ever saw was Ed Sullivan. My dad was a real roustabout he went from job to job, working in oil fields and what have you, doing what he could. I mean, it was the sticks and basic things were hard to come by. We lived in a trailer for a year and a half and went to the bathroom in the woods Even the local school had outhouses—and that was

when I was in the sixth grade. Your life was centered around God, your church, your family. But primarily the church.

PLAYBOY: Were your parents as fervent as you in their religious convictions?

BRYANT: No. They got away from the church; they really never had a church home. I felt responsible and I blamed myself.

PLAYBOY: What happened after your parents remarried?

BRYANT: We moved to Oklahoma City and I thought it was the end of the world. It was the biggest city I'd ever seen and the adjustment was real hard. Then my mom and dad started fighting again. They divorced again when I was 12. I didn't see my father for a long time afterward—he moved to another city, found another job, and we'd hear from him once in a while, but it was a long time between phone calls. A lot of that period I don't remember. I guess I really don't want to. It was real painful and it just about killed my mother. She was a very submissive wife—she was too submissive and it angered me. She let my dad step all over her and she would have done anything to get him back. Mother had a terrible inferiority complex. My father was a very proud man, a hard worker, but he didn't communicate well with his family. When Daddy left, I had to sort of become the head of the household—iron the clothes, make the dinner and generally be supportive. I learned to relate to adults and I seemingly had great sophistication, though I really don't. Life was hard for my mother, because she had to learn everything the hard way. I mean, she married when she was 18 and she didn't even know anything about sex until after her honeymoon night

PLAYBOY: Did she talk to you about sex?

BRYANT: When the time came, she tried, but it would have been better if she had described more. Even so, she did better than her mother. Grandma married when she was 15 and never told a soul about anything. Grandma Berry was love personified and a real pioneer woman, but she did have her hang-ups. Anyway, after the second divorce, Mother had to rely on us kids—and trust us in our dating. We were proud that she could trust us. It was almost like growing up with my big sister rather than my mother she was only 18 years older than me. I knew she blamed God for her problems—and she was very bitter about God. Eventually, she remarried, we moved to Tulsa and my mother rejoined the church. She was really beautiful when we were growing up; she had a great figure. She's chunky now since she stopped smoking, but that's okay, because you want your mother to smell sweet.

PLAYBOY: So you resented your father?

BRYANT: I tried very hard to forgive him for what lie had done to my mother and to me. Because of him, I think I went through life for a long time hating all men, including my husband, Bob. It took me a long time to get over my resentment of Daddy. For many years, I thought I'd forgiven him, when I really hadn't. It wasn't until 1974 that I truly forgave him, when I realized that I couldn't blame him for his actions. But it took a long time, let me tell you.

PLAYBOY: How did your musical ability progress?

BRYANT: People kept saying, "How can such a big voice come from such an itty-bitty child?" It's just a natural gift that God gave me. I have natural rhythm, a quality you either have or you don't. It was in my blood and I was determined to make the best of it. I'd spend most every weekend traveling around the state and singing before the Lions Club, the Elks, that sort of thing. I was billed as Little Miss Terrific. By the time I was 12, I had my own television show. I'd won a contest on the Gizmo Goodkin Talent Show and I got my own 15-minute show every Friday night. I had to become an adult real young. In some ways I was ready, but in other ways I was robbed of having a nice normal childhood.

PLAYBOY: Did you have normal childhood fears?

BRYANT: Oh, yes. I remember one time when we were living in a bad part of Oklahoma City, after Daddy left for good, there was a Peeping Tom around. One night I was sleeping with my mother and she heard a noise and ran to the back door to make sure it was locked, and somebody grabbed the doorknob and tried to open it. Then she ran to the front door and just as she got there, somebody tried to get in the front door, too. It was a very frightening experience. So afterward, Mother went to bed with a butcher knife. As far as a physical experience is concerned, I've never been afraid I always thought I could do anything. But spooky movies used to freak me out.

PLAYBOY: Do they still?

BRYANT: Yes; I would not see Jaws or The Exorcist. In fact, most movies made these days I find morally objectionable. But one movie I saw as a kid that really impressed me was So Dear to My Heart. It was an old Disney movie in which a little kid who didn't have much money raised this little black lamb and entered him in the contest at the state fair. The black lamb didn't win, but he got a special ribbon—he was a loser, and I identified with him and the movie has stuck in my head forever.

I really do think I grew up too quick. Bob tells me I never had a real childhood because I'm so serious about so many things. I think the thing I've had to learn as an adult is a sense of humor. I don't mean learn it, really, but just to be able to laugh at myself in different situations. You know, knowing how to relax and just be silly, do silly things. It's taken a lot of pain for me to get to a place where I can have a sense of humor. Oh, I always had a kind of cynical, straightforward one. In a way, I guess I've always been funny—not to everybody but to people who know me. My friends tell me I'm a big tease all the time.

PLAYBOY: Did your sense of humor help you when the jokes started during the Dade County campaign?

BRYANT: Yeah. A lot of the jokes that are told about me are not really filthy or vicious—well, I've learned to laugh at them. I got a big kick out of one cartoon in The Miami Herald that showed me leaning over some guy's shoulder and saying, "Oh, I think I saw one over there underneath the Sunshine Tree." And I was bending over and my bottom was real huge and there was a flag on it. I thought, Well, they could have made my bottom a little smaller. They really thought they were hurting me, when really it's so far from the truth it's funny. But I liked the flag. At least they caught the fact that I am patriotic. But I didn't like the big bottom. So I've learned more how to relax and be silly about some things. Not everything, of course—I never read silly novels, for instance.

PLAYBOY: What do you read?

BRYANT: I read constantly, but I don't read nonreligious stuff. I don't have the time

PLAYBOY: Have you read the classics? Shakespeare, Melville, Henry James …?

BRYANT: I read Hemingway and stuff like that in school. I loved The Old Man and the Sea. The theme is nonviolence and I hate violence. There's so much of it on television these days, it makes me nervous. I loved reading romantic stories—I loved Wuthering Heights when I read it a long time ago—but I don't read those kinds of things anymore. I used to read books that would make me fantasize—romance stories and what have you. I've since learned.... It's like the movies. I loved romantic movies like Gone with the Wind, but I realized the effect of that kind of thing when your home life isn't ideal, you seek it somewhere else, so that your natural relationship with your husband becomes distorted. For a long time, that was a real problem with me and Bob, because I was preserving my own ideal Hollywood's ideal—and ignoring the real problems that come up between a husband and a wife. It's the same thing with the modern-day housewife and the afternoon soap operas. Let's face it the housewives identify with the soap operas because the shows uplift them from their humdrum daily life. They compare their own lives with the TV show, rather than remembering God's word—it's bound to affect them badly. The women are told it's OK to have an affair if their home life is frustrating. Just plain garbage. They watch television because it's a vicarious thrill to live that life—to those poor bored women, the grass is always greener on the other side,

and they are tempted by Satan to believe his side is the way, so that by the time the husband comes home after a hard day at the office, the housewife hates the box he's put her in. What she's missing is the challenge she can create—what greater responsibility is there than to be a loving wife and mother, to compensate for the things her husband is missing?

PLAYBOY: Let's back up a moment. What gave your career its biggest push?

BRYANT: Arthur Godfrey. One of his talent scouts came to Tulsa and held a competition. I won hands down, week after week. I was determined I would win. When I won, the decision to go to New York was automatic—I didn't even have to pray about it, until my pastor talked to me. I really didn't have peace in my heart about leaving for the big time. What if God says no? I thought. I was miserable until I prayed to God and he gave a yes right back to me. I can't explain it, but I just knew it would be okay.

PLAYBOY: But you were already a star, in terms of Oklahoma. How did that affect your teenage life? In terms of boy-girl social intercourse?

BRYANT: Well, it didn't help my self-image. I was kind of scrawny—I'd never get the captain of the football team, I knew, so it was surprising to me that I got to date a lot of neat guys. As a matter of fact, I dated my pastor's son for three years. We made plans to get married. Oh, we were so perfect—he had a beautiful voice and we sang together in the church choir. I just adored him. But one night we went out in his car and he pulled out a cigarette. g"Look, you don't really know me," he said. I said, "Of course, I'm surprised that you smoke, but what does that have to do with us?" He told me he wanted to live it up and get his kicks. So we broke up and, immediately, he started going with a gal who had a bad reputation. It just broke my heart. I wanted to die. I felt the world was coming to an end and I didn't even go to school for a week. I was just sick. I decided then that I wouldn't marry until I was 25.

PLAYBOY: But you were glamorous by small-town standards. Surely, Satan tempted you in numerous ways—such as sex. How did you resist? Or did you?

BRYANT: See, the kids today have a much harder time dealing with sex, because it's no longer g"in" to be a virgin. In my time, when I went to Will Rogers High School, it was not the hip thing to do to go to bed with somebody, or even to let a boy fondle you—you just didn't do that. Some girls did it, sure, but their reputation was ruined all over town. And because I was such a hardworking girl, I didn't date that much. I concentrated on my career, my church activities and my grade-point average, and I was just too busy to be tempted by the Devil. If I dated some guy who tried to pet with me, I just told him, "Look, you can take me home right now, if you want—I'm not gonna go any further. If you don't enjoy being with me as a person, just take me home." I mean, I loved the kissing part and, I must say, I had some pretty passionate feelings, too, because I'm no prude, but I knew where to stop. My faith was so much a part of me that I knew my body was a temple of God and that God held it sacred. And I knew that my husband would know if I had been promiscuous and that if I didn't save myself for my marriage, if I wasn't pure, I would miss out. The consequences just weren't worth it to me. I think a lot of it had to do with the fact that I was saved when I was eight years old and my beliefs were reinforced in the public schools then through prayer—this was before that atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair made the worship of God illegal, you see. Kids today don't even know God, unless their parents are religious

PLAYBOY: You never let sexual temptation get out of hand, then?

BRYANT: Well, there were times when I was tempted, but because I was faithful to God, I wasn't willing to step over that line. I knew the boy would go as far as the girl would let him and, mainly, I tried not to get into situations that I couldn't get out of.

PLAYBOY: What about other teenage temptations? Is rock 'n' roll today something you disapprove of?

BRYANT: Oh, yes. In my days, the lyrics were understandable and you didn't have to slow it down to hear the dirty cuss words and the jargon that parents today can't understand.

PLAYBOY: Come on. You admit in one of your books that when you added a hard, driving beat to "Till There Was You," you achieved your first 1,000,000 seller. And even when you were coming of age in the Fifties, there were plenty of sexual double-entendres in the rock lyrics.

BRYANT: Yeah, but it's not like today, where there are a lot of rock dances and rock music that are brainwashing the kids, because it's all very promiscuous and it glorifies promiscuity and acid rock and a lot of those things. The kids get into the dirty lyrics and the beat is just very, very seductive.

PLAYBOY: What do you suppose the thrill was that Pat Boone found on Blueberry Hill?

BRYANT: All I know is that there are a lot of filthy words I've heard in listening to the radio these days that are just shameful and outright sinful. I think a lot of evil things are much more prevalent these days. I think kids growing up today have pressures that we never had in the Fifties. It's so discouraging.

PLAYBOY: Let's get back to the emergence of your career. It was Godfrey who got you out of Oklahoma?

BRYANT: Yeah. I went to New York and, I mean, he was really the king then—he ruled the roost. I went on his morning show, so I had to live in New York and scrounge like a dog to keep up my school grades. Speech was my strongest subject. English I had no problem with. Math—forget it. I just couldn't comprehend. But I did all right, all in all. I had to work hard, and I knew how to work hard. Mother, of course, was very concerned with my fate in New York. We went up there together the first time and found that the Salvation Army ran a hotel for women right on the edge of Greenwich Village—the area was a pretty good neighborhood then. And in that hotel, no men could get past the lobby—mother liked that. I met some interesting people during that period

PLAYBOY: Like who?

BRYANT: Well, Chubby Checker—he was very hot and heavy. And Leslie Uggams—talk about a straight little girl who was really naïve.... Anyway, there were things I didn't tell Mother about.

PLAYBOY: Such as?

BRYANT: I don't want to tell you.

PLAYBOY: Oh, go ahead.

BRYANT: Well, there was this one television producer who made it clear to me that I could be a very, very big TV star if I slept with him.

PLAYBOY: You were still a virgin?

BRYANT: Absolutely. Anyway, the whole thing scared me to death. I really prayed and prayed—I wanted to make it in show business so bad. So I went to a guy who was like an uncle to me who was in the business. He asked me if I drank and I said no. So he said, "In that case, you'll have no problem." I prayed some more, and then I went to this producer's apartment for dinner. He made the overtures, but I was able to talk him out of it.

PLAYBOY: How?

BRYANT: I made sure that the cook stayed around—I didn't want to be alone with him. Anyway, it worked. The word got around and he was so embarrassed that he didn't dare try to hurt my career. Thank God.

PLAYBOY: As you did.

BRYANT: As I did.

PLAYBOY: What was your next noteworthy achievement? Entering the Miss America Pageant?

BRYANT: Not yet. When I was 16, I did a tour with Ricky Nelson. I really had a crush on him.

PLAYBOY: Was it returned in kind?

BRYANT: No. He was very big then. He liked to swing with the airline stewardesses. I was just a kid to him. I also did some tours with Fabian and Bobby Rydell, and later on, I did American Bandstand with people like Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon—that was after I got a re-

cording contract.

PLAYBOY: Then you entered the Miss Oklahoma pageant, first as Miss Tulsa, then on to the Miss America competition. Why did you do it?

BRYANT: I did it on a dare. Some of my friends made me do it. One of my basic motivations was to get the Miss America scholarship so I could go to college. I was very awkward—I had skin and weight problems. I was fairly well proportioned, but I knew I was no beauty. And most of the other girls were much older than I was—I was only 18. I had to fake my way through the pageant. And I just couldn't believe that I made Miss Oklahoma and the national finals

PLAYBOY: Wasn't the act of parading around in a tight swimsuit a violation of your Christian ethics?

BRYANT: It did bother me. But I figured, well, you go to the beach in your swimsuit.... I didn't feel ashamed or anything, but I didn't enjoy it. It was kind of a necessary evil. My over-all attitude was that it was a one-time experience, so enjoy it. My basic weakness was in answering the judges' questions—I was not aware of world affairs and I felt very inadequate.

PLAYBOY: What did they ask you?

BRYANT: I don't even recall. I rattled on and on—I didn't know what in the Sam Hill I was talking about, even though I'd boned up all week by reading Newsweek. Part of the reward for winning the pageant was a recording contract, and I already had a recording contract. So I was quite pleased that I got as far as second runner-up, although I was really disappointed that I didn't get the Miss Congeniality trophy—I'd ended up in a tie with another gal for it, and because I made second runner-up, the judges broke the tie and gave her the trophy. I really wanted it.... It's funny, though. To this day, people come up to me and ask me what it was like to be Miss America.

PLAYBOY: What was your next step?

BRYANT: I moved to Chicago and enrolled in Northwestern University—I'd gotten an offer from The Breakfast Club to sing on the show and Northwestern had a good music school. I had no choice, really—in this business, when your career gets going, you take advantage of what you get. The pace was just running me down, I was working so hard. I was trying to do everything, I was overworked and I was very lonely in Chicago.

PLAYBOY: No boyfriends?

BRYANT: Well, kind of unofficially, I was engaged to Pat Boone's brother, Nick Todd. We didn't have a ring or anything, but we dated when we could and went to church together. That wasn't his real name—he changed it because he didn't want to feel he was making it because of his famous brother. I'd first met Nick in New York when I was doing the Godfrey show. We were very close and I think we were in love with love more than anything else—there weren't that many straight guys around and he was available and I was available and we hit it off. I went to Nashville and met his parents and everything....

PLAYBOY: And then Bob Green entered your life That was in 1959?

BRYANT: Yeah, right after I went to crown the new Miss Tulsa, Bobby Darin was the m.c. for the ceremony and he asked me for a date. I told him I had to leave for a disc jockeys' convention in Miami that night to promote my records—and that's where I met Bob Green. He was a real big glamorous disc jockey then. Bob met me at the Miami airport and I took one look at him and went "Wow!" you know, he was a real dreamboat. He drove this neat white T-bird with his name on the side. He wore these silk suits, he came on real strong. He looked totally different than he looks now. He was so good-looking, and lie was in shape, and it was incredible. I didn't think I'd have a chance with him—I expected to get rejected. Plus, I thought he was too good-looking to be a nice boy. And he was always surrounded by these pretty gals who were just falling all over him. Everywhere we went, the girls would scream and ask for his autograph they didn't know me from Adam. I was surprised when that first day he asked me out for a date, but I turned him down. I was too concerned about singing at the show that night, and Pat and Shirley Boone were there and I didn't want them to think I was stepping out on Nick. And I still was hurting from the rejection of the preacher's son.... I didn't want to get hurt again. I mean, Bob had every girl in town and dated the airline stewardesses and all the pretty gals. He had it made.

PLAYBOY: Yet he was interested in you?

BRYANT: He just couldn't figure me out. I was an oddity—I've always been an oddity. Anyway, after the show that night, I was sitting around in the club, getting bored, and there was smoke and drinking and all, and Bob came over and invited me for a drive, so I said okay. The moon was over Miami and we were driving down Collins Avenue and the music was on and I fell asleep! I knew I was getting to his ego, and when he drove me to the airport the next day, I never thought I'd see him again. Anyway, to make a long story short, he just kept after me—hours of long-distance phone calls, letters every day. I kept telling him not to get his hopes up, that I was engaged and that I didn't want to get married until I was 25. But he just wouldn't take no for an answer. But after Bob, I knew I just didn't feel the same way about Nick. I told Nick about Bob and we stayed good friends after we broke up. When I broke up with Nick was when I realized how much I loved Bob. We were both ready to settle down, I guess, and we had the same values—plus, Bob didn't smoke or drink, which surprised me.

PLAYBOY: And you shared the same religious beliefs?

BRYANT: Bob wasn't born again until the night before we got married.

PLAYBOY: Was that a deal you made?

BRYANT: We had no conflict about it. But I was very scared of marriage and I almost backed out at the last minute.

PLAYBOY: Was marriage everything you'd dreamed it would be?

BRYANT: It depends on what you mean.

PLAYBOY: Well, sexually, for starters.

BRYANT: I have a fantastic sex life!

PLAYBOY: Emotionally, then.

BRYANT: Marriage is very hard. Lots of problems are involved with two people working out a loving relationship and adhering to God's laws. And it upset me when I was told I could not bear children. We adopted our first child, Bobby, Jr. Later, when it turned out I could bear children, I had twins who were born months prematurely and they almost died. Plus Bob was making a lot more money than I was then. Finally, Bob became my manager and that solved a lot of problems. He's been a great manager, and until I started getting boycotted and black-listed by the militant homosexuals last year, I had all the work I could handle.

PLAYBOY: We'll get back to that. First tell us about what you have described as the most important turning point in your life, when you had

"It's almost Communistic the way Phyllis Schlafly and the ones who truly represent American women cannot get forums."

a nervous breakdown in 1974.

BRYANT: It was not a nervous breakdown—it verged on it, certainly, but it really makes me mad that the militant homosexuals try to use it against me by saying, "She flipped out, she went crazy."

PLAYBOY: Well, what did happen?

BRYANT: I lost three people very dear to me in one year. I sang at all their funerals. Dan Topping [the former owner of the New York Yankees], my Grandpa Berry and a gal named Teddy who was like a big sister to me and who was about my age when she died. I couldn't understand why God would just nip her in the bud when she was in the prime of her life. There are few people I can share my heart with, and I could talk to Teddy about things I couldn't even talk with Bob or my pastor about. It was that deep. Then Bob developed a heart condition and almost died, and I had to think for the first time about raising four kids alone without Teddy to lean on anymore. It was after Grandpa Berry's funeral when the straw landed that broke the camel's back. It was like God wanted to put me flat on my back so the only way I could look was up. He knew I was holding out on Him and He wanted the whole of me, not just part of me. He knew I had a lot of rebellion and anger and bitterness in me. I thought I'd forgiven my daddy, but I hadn't I still hated and resented him, and the pent-up hatred was poisoning my marriage and my relationship with people all around me. So I collapsed after Grandpa's funeral I totally gave up. I lay down and I just.... I'd decided not to see his body, but after I sang at the funeral, I changed my mind; before they buried him I wanted to see him. When I did, I just broke down and they laid me down on the pew right next to him and I couldn't stop crying—I was just hysterical and that shook everybody up. They just couldn't comprehend that I would go under I was like the Rock of Gibraltar, and always had been, even as a child. I'd always learned to lift my head above the jungle and be responsible, no matter what. For the first time in my life, I didn't want to be responsible anymore. I wanted to do away with all responsibility I was so tired. I think had I been anyone else, I probably would have had a heart attack or a total nervous breakdown, but I just came to a point where I didn't want to do anything. I just sat in my office and looked at the stack of letters from people who were asking me for advice and counseling—and I just couldn't be responsible anymore. I needed advice and counseling, and the one person I could have talked to, Teddy, was gone. I said, "No more," and I would just sit in my office all day. I said, "I'm not going to do anything else, ever." It scared me to death. Bob was scared to death, too.

PLAYBOY: Did you consider seeing a psychiatrist?

BRYANT: No, it was so painful it was like I felt I'd be committing a sin by going to a psychiatrist; can you imagine that? I thought it would be denying Jesus. And I knew that a lot of psychiatrists tell you things totally contrary to Biblical teaching, such as in order to get along with your husband, go out and have an affair, or something like that. But friends of ours told us about this Christian retreat in Rosemead, California it's sort of a Christian counseling center, quite famous. Marabel Morgan and lots of famous Christian people have gone there. So I decided I had to do something, that God was sending me out there. The night before I went, I told Bob, "I don't think I'm ever coming back." I really thought that I was so scared and weary. We arrived at night and I met the psychologist and I liked him very much. I was told to come back the next morning and to plan on staying for at least two weeks. When we got to the hotel, I just could not sleep. I didn't want to wake Bob, so I went into this tiny bathroom and closed the door and got down on my hands and knees and just started praying. Something from way down deep inside of me was trying to come out. It was, so strange. I took a legal pad and a pencil and I started writing down these things that were bugging me. I filled 17 whole pages.

PLAYBOY: What did you write?

BRYANT: Some things I wouldn't want printed because it does no good to bring them up, but...well, the hatred of my father and the resentment toward Bob, things that went way back into my childhood and other more recent things, such as little difficulties I was having with the kids that I'd kept pent up. And the fact that I'd had all the responsibility pushed upon me for so many years—I had had responsibilities thrust on me no 12-year-old should have had, and they were still weighing on me. Anyway, I felt like a different person when I walked into the psychologist's office the next day and showed him the 17 pages. He said, "It looks like my work has already been done for me." God had been taking me in different stages, but I was holding out on Him without even knowing it, and now I was saying, OK, God, I'll give You my emotions, too. I still felt very ashamed that I'd even had to go to Rosemead—I just felt so guilty because of bad teachings about psychology and I didn't want anyone to know I'd even gone.

PLAYBOY: Was it that hard to admit?

BRYANT: It hurt me to admit that I was that human, yes. It took me 34 years to be able to admit that.

PLAYBOY: Has your marriage improved since Rosemead?

BRYANT: I never realized before then how I dominated Bob, but, fortunately, he was stronger than I and we were able to work these things out. The main problem we had in our marriage was that, because of my father, I basically had a hate for men. I mean, there were times when I literally hated my husband—I couldn't help it. But I was responsible because I allowed it to fester and didn't take it to the Lord. And divorce wasn't in my vocabulary, because I'd suffered the scars of divorce as a child and I knew what my children would suffer from it. But, above all, I knew it was against God's word. Bob and I still have our ups and downs, because I'm not a goody two-shoes. I know now I'm a human being, just like anybody else. If it weren't for Jesus Christ in my heart and life, I probably would have married several times. I probably would have slept around with guys and whatever. I always say that I'm just a sinner saved by grace

PLAYBOY: What are your sins?

BRYANT: Oh, I don't know...maybe the sin of intolerance. [Laughs]

PLAYBOY: That's exactly what those you call militant homosexuals say about you.

BRYANT: I just meant it as a pun.

PLAYBOY: A pun? What pun?

BRYANT: I try not to be intolerant. All I'm saying is I don't have anything to brag about. The reason I can relate to the homosexual is because I've had emotional scars in my own life. I really felt the rejection of my father, and that is one of the things that maybe lead someone going into homosexuality. Look, I don't hate homosexuals—that's the truth, no matter what they think of my motives. I've always said I love the sinner but I hate the sin.

PLAYBOY: You've been saying that America and her children are being destroyed. You've compared America to Sodom and Gomorrah; you say God destroys the kind of nation that America has become.

BRYANT: Absolutely. I believe that's what has been happening to America.

PLAYBOY: Do you think it still is?

BRYANT: I believe now that we have a greater hope than ever before—that God is allowing America one last space to repent. If the parents of American children had stood by God's word, had they not had their head in the sand for so many years, the destruction of America's moral fiber wouldn't have happened. But it happened so fast no one knew it was happening. But now it seems people have a hunger. They've seen how so-called humanism works. They were told, "Well, one way to change the world is to educate the people. You educate them to a certain point, they're going to change." Well, has that been true? Has that happened? No. Our country was strong for so long because we claimed we were one nation under God and God blessed us. I believe that right now, God has removed himself from America. If we'll look through history, we're in the same situation as were Greece and Rome, when homosexuality and other sins were so rampant they became the norm.

GERMAINE *Love*

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PR **LSA PUBLICATIONS | @LEO.ALDERMAN @LSAPUBLICATIONS**
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Such an honour to have a gorgeous and talented beauty feature! We're curious to know how your journey has been as one of the most respected models in your industry.
Thank you! You're too kind. I think I've been quite lucky to shoot with some amazing photographers around the world and I've had some amazing experiences. My journey has been challenging this year with all the restrictions in place but I've not let it stop me or get me down.

Were you excited to shoot for Playboy again? Let's just say when my agent called me to give me the good news, I screamed and did a dance on the spot!

Describe your perfect day off. It would be a chilled day spent at the stables with my dogs, followed by a nice meal and some online shopping somewhere in the mix.

2020 was an incredibly challenging for us all, what would you say has been the most challenging thing for you so far? The most challenging part for me was not being able to go to the gym. The gym for me is really good for my

mental health and to have that taken away was really difficult.

I do also miss putting on little dresses and huge heels and going out to bars and clubs with my friends.

What are some of the things you like to do, behind the cameras and all the glitz and glamour? I love travelling. I've been lucky , I've managed to get away a few times this year. I enjoy skiing and horse riding, I'd say they're my top hobbies. I love action and adventure.

If we were to try and sweep you right off your feet, what are some of the things you look for in an ideal partner? I love someone that I can engage in a good conversation with. You know those ones where you constantly smile at each other when you're both talking. A guy that can me laugh is such a turn on.

And what would make you go running in the opposite direction as fast as possible? Someone who is obsessed with their phone. There's nothing worse than wasting time with someone scrolling. I instantly think why am I wasting my time here? Taxi!

Oh and someone who doesn't like dogs! Huge no no !

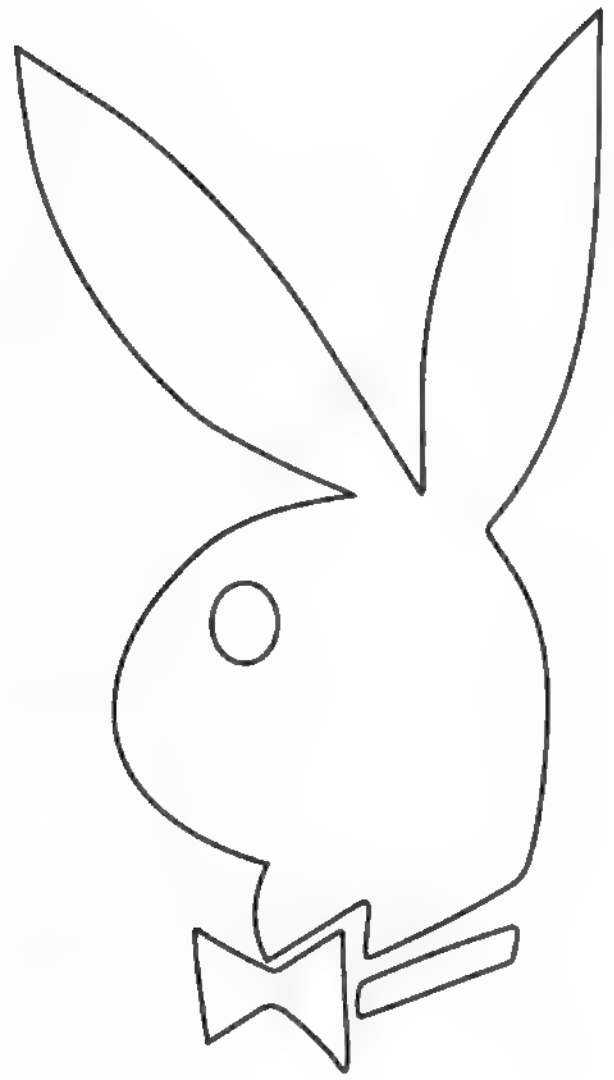
You're a seemingly talented lady, what are some, if any, of your hidden talents not many people know about? I'm a strong swimmer. I used to compete internationally when I was younger. I still love to swim, I don't think that passion has ever left me.

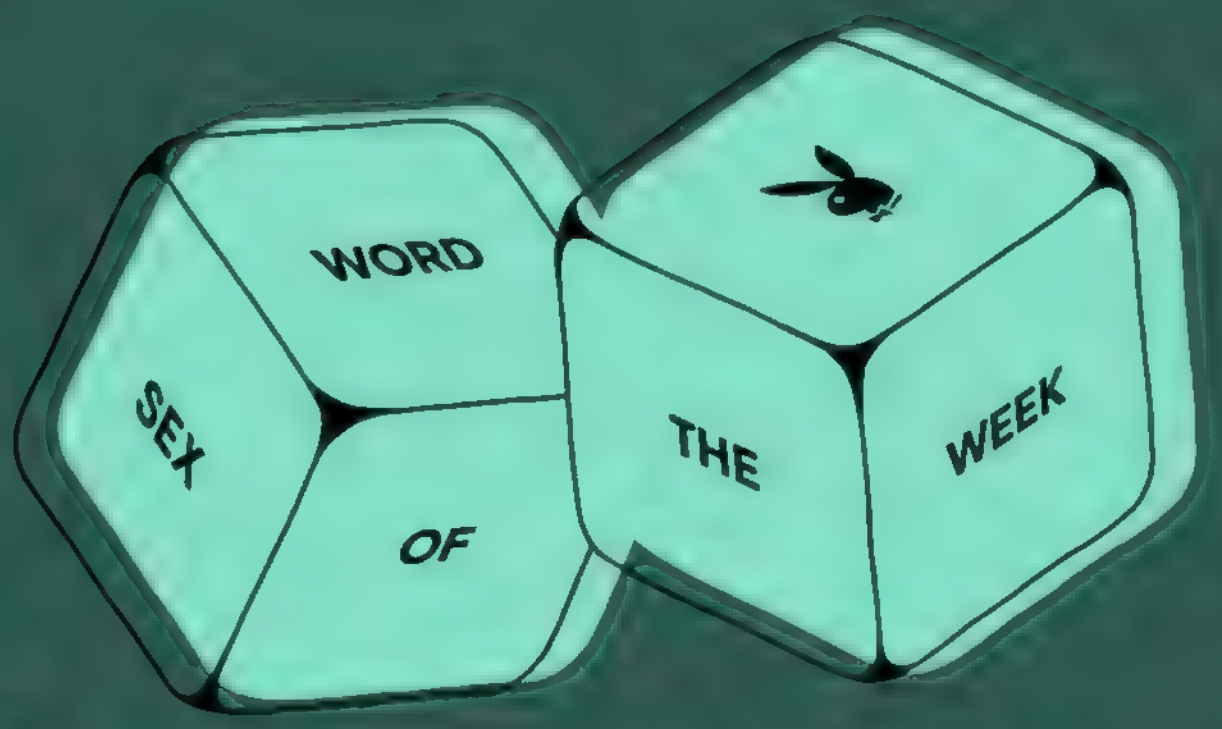
I'm also into contact sports , pre covid I'd go to my local jujitsu and boxing gym. I quite like the rough and tumble, I think WWE is the ultimate goal though.

What makes you feel sexy? Sexy Lingerie. I have boxes and boxes full at home. When I wear sexy lingerie it makes me feel good.

What can we expect from you this year? Any major plans and exciting things we can look forward to from you? It depends on covid restrictions. But I'm going to focus on myself any way I can this year.
I'd definitely like to keep travelling if I can, there are so many places around the world I'd like to explore.

It has been a true pleasure getting to know you! Any final words for our readers out there? It's been a pleasure to be featured again and Thankyou for all of your support. Stay safe xx





Pheromone Party

WRITTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

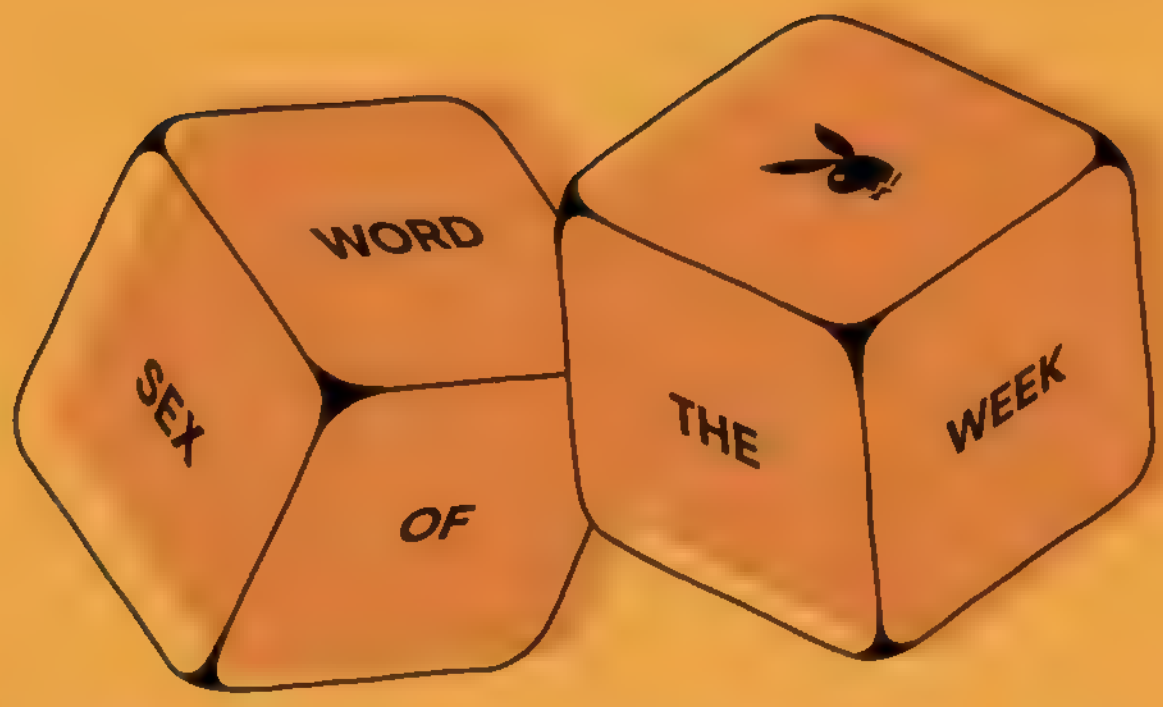
If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

pheromone party (*n*) a social gathering where attendees choose anonymous mates based entirely on scent

What Claire missed most about dating pre-Covid was the smell of a lover, the feeling of waking up next to someone completely engulfed in their scent. She fondly remembered going to raucous pheromone parties in Miami before everything abruptly shut down.

[illegible] mates they want to get to know better.

[illegible] engaged version of our intimate lives.

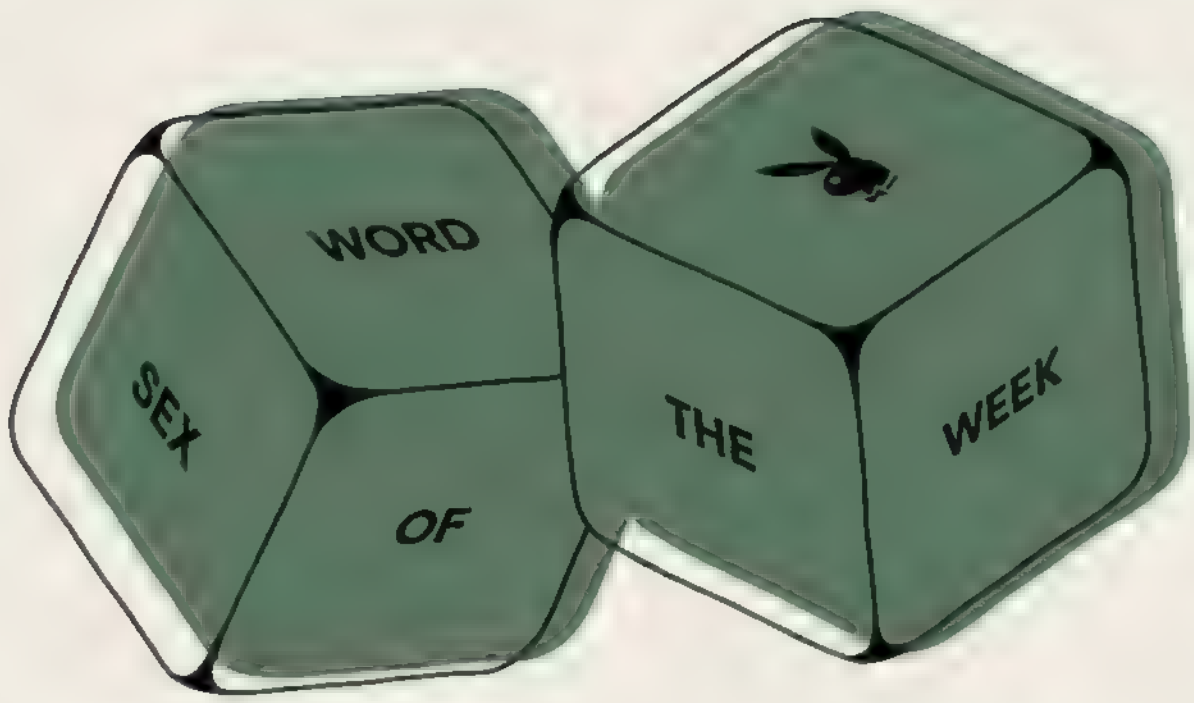


Compersion

WRITTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

wife's excitement.



Sex Surrogate

WRITTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

surrogate partner therapy or SPT (*noun*) a therapeutic relationship between a therapist, a client and a surrogate partner that is designed to help the client achieve better sexual intimacy

In order to feel comfortable with penetrative intercourse after a painful experience, Mia talked to her therapist about enlisting the services of a sex surrogate.

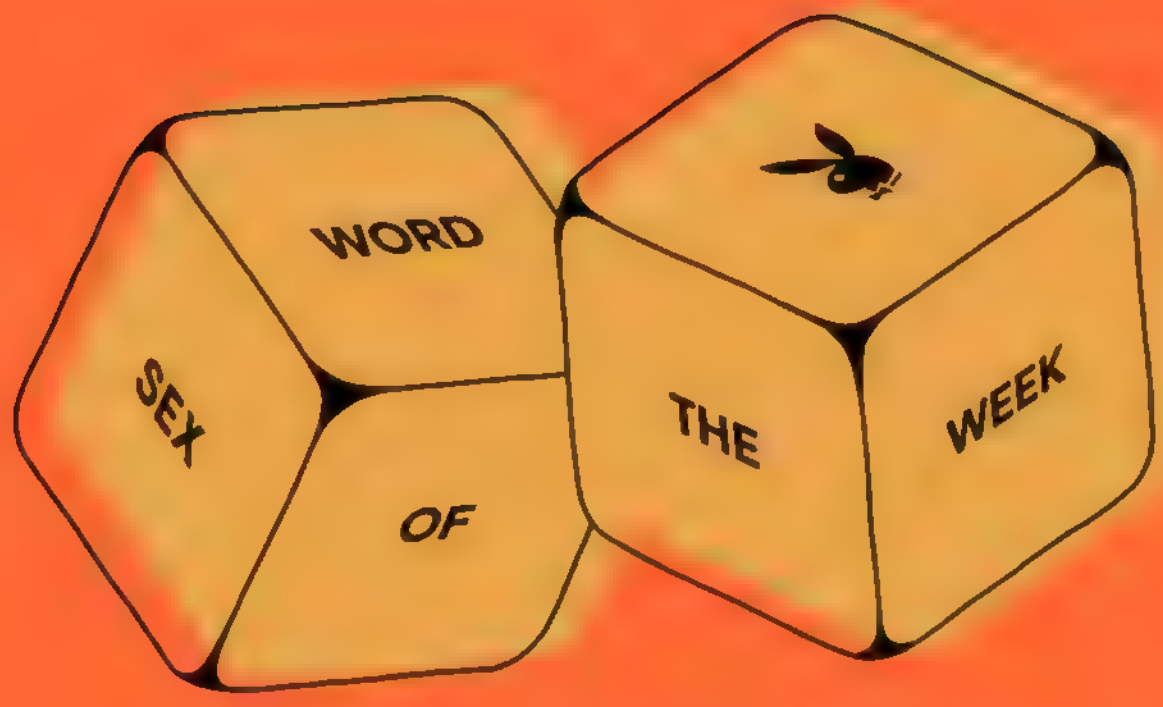
Most people are familiar with the term surrogate when it comes to pregnancy, but fewer are aware of how it can apply to sex. Surrogate partner therapy refers to the relationship between a client, a partner surrogate and—this part is really important a licensed therapist, usually but not always a sex therapist.

The goal of this form of therapy is to encourage the client to become more comfortable with intimacy and sexuality. It's about opening up the client's body and mind to be more receptive to pleasure. Sex can be a source of anxiety or fear for a lot people, and a sex surrogate helps the client confront and navigate those emotions. With SPT, they can be sexually vulnerable in a safe space. The work of a sex surrogate includes, but is not limited to, breathwork, meditation exercises, mutual touching and, yes, occasionally sexual intercourse, depending on the boundaries established between the client, the surrogate and the therapist.

People who may benefit from the use of a sex surrogate are survivors of sexual trauma, those with erectile dysfunction or premature ejaculation, those who suffer from vaginismus or other pelvic floor dysfunctions that make penetration painful, those who live with body dysmorphia or those who just get super nervous with anything related to sex.

It is common for sex surrogates to be conflated with sex workers, especially in relationships where the surrogate has committed to having intercourse as part of the therapy. But they are not the same. The primary mission of sex surrogacy is healing, not sexual release.

If you've thoroughly researched it or had it recommended by your sex therapist, sex surrogacy can be a transformative way to reclaim your sexuality and restore confidence.



Ahegao

WRITTEN BY
ANITA LITTLE

If your libidinous mind can imagine it, there's probably already a term for it

ahegao (*n*) a term from Japanese porn that describes a facial expression of extreme sexual ecstasy

In 2019, it seemed streetwear fans couldn't get enough of the ahegao trend, with illustrations of the lewd facial expression blanketing hoodies and backpacks.

If you're an anime geek, you may already be familiar with this term, which comes from the world of Japanese cartoons. Ahegao refers to the exaggerated facial expression a woman character has during the throes of sexual ecstasy. What does it look like? Well, feel free to do a Google Image search, but an ahegao illustration usually depicts flushed cheeks, crossed eyes, a protruding tongue and occasionally tears, sweat or drool emerging from one's face. To put it colloquially, ahegao is a heightened, almost absurdist version of an O-face. The expression is meant to show a complete loss of control and the utter surrender of one's senses during climax.

This isn't a new term. It has been associated with hentai (anime pornography) and other forms of Japanese erotic art since the 1990s, but, thanks to the internet, it has taken on a vibrant life of its own outside of hentai. Ahegao now has an almost inescapable presence in meme culture, with people using it as an emoji to express their extreme approval or delight at something. And if one searches the #ahegao hashtag on Instagram it would appear that some female influencers have even built entire followings around their ability to mimic the perfect ahegao face. Gamer girl and cosplay model Belle Delphine is one of the biggest internet stars to popularize and capitalize on the ahegao trend, boasting nearly a quarter-million followers on Instagram and a freshly minted OnlyFans account with nearly 100,000 likes.

Ahegao has entered streetwear culture as well, with erotic ahegao hoodies enjoying so much hype last year that they attracted controversy and ended up being banned from several major anime conventions. The godfather of hentai, Toshio Maeda, even did an ahegao-inspired collaboration with popular streetwear brand Supreme, that included sweatshirts, t-shirts and pillows.

Being a flawless combination of hot but goofy, ahegao seems to hit a psychosexual sweet spot, and it doesn't look like it will be leaving internet culture anytime soon.

Playboy Advisor

How Do I Achieve My Dildo Dreams?

Zoë Ligon, a.k.a. Detroit's Dildo Duchess, offers her expertise on how to reinvent up our bedroom selves with sex toys

WRITTEN BY
ZOË LIGON

Q: I'm 27 years old, and I'm training my body for anal sex with a partner. I wanted to practice with dildos or butt plugs first so I could move at my own speed and comfort level without the pressure of having someone else there. I have plenty of experience using sex toys for clitoral stimulation, but anything involving the bum is completely new territory for me. Do you have any tips for beginners when it comes to sex toys and anal prepping?

It sounds like you're already in the right mind-set. When it comes to butt stuff, it's all about moving at the speed your body determines. Although this can be said for all kinds of sex, including vaginal intercourse, the anal canal is significantly more delicate Getting familiar with your own body before playing with a partner will only help make the partnered experiences easier to navigate. Deep awareness of your physical sensations and tension is key to preventing discomfort/injury and providing pleasure. And as a bonus, paying attention to the nuance of the sensations will probably make you more aware of your bodily sensations outside of butt play!

Before you consider purchasing an anal toy, it helps to start exploring with a well-lubricated finger. Using nitrile gloves can help reduce the discomfort of any rough edges on your fingers, and it also makes cleanup a breeze. Start out exclusively stimulating the external portions of your butt the perineum, the outer area of the sphincter, whatever feels relaxing and yummy to you. Massaging the outside of your anus will help you become acquainted with how it tenses and relaxes. The anal opening has a ring of muscle in the sphincter that you can consciously relax or contract, but there is a second ring of muscle a centimeter or two past the opening that cannot be consciously relaxed. You've got to truly let go of any inner tension cords you're unconsciously holding. In that way, anal play is a lot like meditation!

Once your butt is relaxed, it will receive whatever you gently press up against it. Gentle pressure can help guide a finger, toy or phallus past the sphincter, but you never need to force or jam something up

THE MAIN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PLUG AND A DILDO IS THAT PLUGS ARE DESIGNED TO GO IN AND STAY IN, WHEREAS A DILDO IS A MORE ACTIVE TOY.

against your butt. Approaching the sphincter at a 90-degree angle generally doesn't feel as gentle as approaching from the side and "tipping in." Another benefit of starting out with fingers is that you can feel the biofeedback of how relaxed you are. Gentle circular or side-to-side, up-and-down motions can also help massage the sphincter into relaxation once you're in up to your first knuckle. Past the sphincter, you have options! Fingering a butthole is very similar to fingering a vagina, just with a more delicate canal. You can move in and out, rock and swivel your fingers, or aim for prostate or indirect G-spot stimulation.

Once you're acquainted with fingers, this playtime will inform what type of toy you'll go for next. You can even measure the circumference of your preferred number of fingers, and compare that to the sex toy specs online to ensure you're getting an appropriate size. The main difference between a plug and a dildo is that plugs are designed to go in and stay in, whereas a dildo is a more active toy. As long as it has a flared base or definite stopping place, such as a reinforced pull-ring that won't get sucked up into your butt, it's anal safe!

Plugs are great for getting more acquainted with the sensations of fullness. The slim neck toward the base of a plug allows the anus to close around it more comfortably so you can leave it in for longer-term wear. Dildos are generally going to provide sensations similar to anal sex with a penis simply because they don't have a narrow area for your butthole to close around. There isn't a specific size or amount of time for play that you should be aiming for; that will boil down to the subtle cues your body gives you as you explore.

Besides lube, patience and awareness, placing a towel or blanket underneath you will help you mentally relax. Poop is stored in the colon and doesn't hang out in the rectum unless you're about to have a bowel movement, but, given that the butt is indeed a poop chute, shit happens from time to time. Try not to worry about that aspect of anal play so much—worst-case scenario, you can wash the towel, shower and get back to it!

Finally, it's important that whoever you are anal-prepping for is just as aware and educated on butt stuff as you are. No one wants their ass jackhammered immediately, like you see in porn. (Remember: Porn is fantasy and a performance.) Unfortunately, many givers of anal pleasure fail to pay attention to the cues of the receiver's body, and anal fissures are not something you want to experience. Lube is mandatory, and it should be reapplied as much as needed. Starting on your back can help with relaxation, but some people find that sitting down on or backing onto a toy or phallus helps give them more control of depth. It sounds like you already have the right mind-set, so just enjoy the beauty of these new sensations without any self-imposed pressure to have it go down in a certain time frame—or at all! My butt is excited for your butt!

Q: I've been dating the same man since high school. We've grown together in a lot of ways, but our bedroom routine hasn't. I regularly use vibrators and dildos during self-pleasure, and if I felt comfortable using my sex toys with my partner it could help to add some variety to our intimacy. (He doesn't know about my use of toys.) The thought of holding a vibe to my clit while he penetrates me sends me to a completely new level of arousal, but I don't know how to broach the subject with him. How do I explain this to him without him thinking I'm judging his sexual prowess?

It can be hard to break any type of routine, not just sexual routines! Sometimes the anxiety leading up to a conversation about sexual needs is far more stressful than the conversation itself. It sounds like this aspect of your solo play is something you are excited to share with him, and I would let that feeling be the leading energy in the way you approach him.

We use tools for nearly every aspect of daily life: eating, working, sleeping. We all have accoutrements that help us live our lives. Sure, we can eat all our meals with our bare hands, but forks, knives and chopsticks can help us enjoy our meals and eat more efficiently. No one has ever felt emasculated by the suggestion that they use a nail gun instead of a hammer to build a house or use a motorized lawn mower over a push mower! Vibrators and dildos are just like those types of tools—they just happen to fall into a more taboo arena.

Sex toys, like tools, aren't replacements for people. They are things people use! Vibrators can't tell you they love you or embrace you, and humans can't vibrate. Sure, humans have body parts that can penetrate and stimulate, but sometimes we get a hand cramp or we're tired or not erect. Furthermore, the vast majority of people with vulvas need external stimulation or external paired with internal stimulation to achieve orgasm. Manual stimulation doesn't do it for everyone, and vibrators help bridge the gap for a lot of people (myself included!). Although there are a lot of myths about vibrators out there, they ultimately make a lot of us very happy and help us have fulfilling sex lives.

If someone cares about us and our pleasure, they will support us doing what we need to do to experience that pleasure. I think if you share how much these toys/tools have helped you enjoy solo sex, it won't come across as anything other than a desire to experience that with him. If he has questions or doesn't know much about vibrators, education about sex toys will help him discard the myths we've all been taught from social discourse. Try not to assume that he will react a certain way or project an expected outcome onto the conversation You might be very surprised; for all you know, he could be waiting for the right moment to suggest toys himself!

Vibrators and sex toys aside, it can be daunting to tell someone about any sex thing you've been keeping private, regardless of what it is. It always helps to be direct in your communication, and you're always welcome to say something like, "I'm nervous to discuss this thing, and I've been having a hard time bringing this up." If you know it's not any statement on his sexual prowess, then there's no need to even bring that up unless he expresses that fear. It's not your job to coddle him and reassure him, either You don't need to make any apologies for the things you enjoy. You can point him in the direction of education and information

on the wonderful world of toys, and he may need to do a bit of research on his own

That's okay! Any relationship will have its moments of awkwardness and discomfort. Being able to communicate and grapple with those moments only makes partnership stronger!

SEX TOYS, LIKE TOOLS, AREN'T REPLACEMENTS FOR PEOPLE. THEY ARE THINGS PEOPLE USE! VIBRATORS CAN'T TELL YOU THEY LOVE YOU OR EMBRACE YOU, AND HUMANS CAN'T VIBRATE.

Q: My question relates to cuckqueaning, so brace yourself. I am in a monogamous BDSM relationship, and I am submissive. For a while, I have fantasized about the m"cuckquean" phenomenon. Him being with other women while I'm forced to watch gets me off to the max. I have serious insecurity issues that are largely undealt with, stemming from adolescence. So it's clear to me why feeling inadequate would actually be desirable, knowing how kink can work. I desperately want to explore this kink I've been suppressing, but it's also the most terrifying thing in the world! I have already told him about it after much consternation, and he expressed interest and said we would take it slow. Do you have any advice on this tension people might have with their kink?

Absolutely! First off, congratulations for being so aware and identifying where these feelings may be coming from. You're absolutely right that kink and BDSM can have funny ways of being connected to prior experiences, especially those from youth. It sounds like you have a supportive partner and have already had preliminary conversations surrounding what you want from the experience—not just what will excite you, but also the areas in which you are apprehensive. Solid foundation!

One major aspect of cuckqueaning/cuckolding that is in opposition to monogamy is the concept of "infidelity." Googling these terms often turns up results with historical definitions that portray it as nonconsensual infidelity, with no acknowledgement of how it can be done consensually. Even if you know this is something you have enthusiastically chosen, the mainstream narrative around infidelity can creep back in and emotionally overpower you.

YOU DON'T NEED TO MAKE ANY APOLOGIES FOR THE THINGS YOU ENJOY.

It sounds like you've already identified the "what" and "why" of it all, and there are many options and exercises to consider to help you move forward. A good ol' pros-and-cons list or cost-benefit analysis will help you determine whether the tension surrounding it is worth it for you. Nerves are bound to come up, but if the stress outweighs the enjoyment for you, now may not be the right time. You can always revisit the idea.

If you choose to go for it, identifying triggers of your insecurity will help minimize the potential for it to be a negative experience. Imagine the scenario in your head, and determine which moments spark that fear. Pause when you feel uncomfortable, and identify your emotions as well as your bodily feelings. Try to think beyond the sex acts, and picture what the moments or days after may feel like. What does the worst-case scenario look like? What does the best-case scenario look like? These questions can help you have better conversations with your partner and the person you invite to join in because they are active participants too!

We are all afraid of loss, and we all experience jealousy and insecurity. Some of that is very rational, and sometimes those feelings are our trauma-brain shouting over our logic and intuition. It's very likely that you will experience fleeting moments of insecurity even in a best-case scenario, so instead of trying to avoid those feelings altogether, you can plan ahead and create a toolkit for handling the various emotions that come up. It is no easy feat! Part of what makes kink so exciting is that we are playing with sensation and/or power exchange. There are many moving parts and variables that keep us on our toes, especially when a new person is brought into the mix. Ultimately, this is your desire, so whether you go for it or choose to keep it a fantasy, there is no rush. Meditate on it without overthinking, and communicate, communicate, communicate!

Antoinette Love RANSOM

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Where were you born and where do you live now? I was born in Springfield, Missouri but raised in Kansas City, Missouri. I currently reside in San Diego, CA and love the weather. I don't miss the winters we use to have in the Midwest it was rough sometimes.

Favorite movie of all time and favorite actor? My favorite movie of all time is, "Goodfellas". It is not the gangster lifestyle I care for, it's the story concept, direction, and the talent in the film I love. I can watch that film over and over and never get tired of it. Robert DeNiro is one of my favorite actors, who's also in the film "Goodfellas". I embraced the era when actors were trained, and it was not based on how many people follow you. Actors like Robert DeNiro, Al Pacino. Denzel Washington, Angela Basset, Sharon Stone, Meryl Streep, etc.

Do you prefer the beach or the pool? I prefer the beach because it relaxes me as soon as my feet hit the sand. I can sit on the beach all day and enjoy the sound of the water. That is my go-to place to meditate when I need a break.

Read the book or watch the movie? I love to read; I have over 1000 books at home. If a movie is premised around a book, I prefer to read the book first. We live in an age where people don't like to read, but I feel you can learn so much more by reading a book. I'm not really a big TV person unless there is a movie I really would like to watch.

If you could be an animal, what would you be and why? I would say a giraffe. The reason is I pay close attention to my surroundings and simultaneously I'm very loving. In addition, I would say I'm loyal by default until I'm deceived or taken advantage by someone.

What attracts you the most in a man? I love a man that can embrace humility but simultaneously have some swag. Meaning I love confidence and style.

Biggest turn on and biggest turnoff? Biggest turn-on is someone who loves to be spontaneous... The biggest turn off is arrogance and taking life for granted.

Describe your perfect date. The perfect date (and this still hasn't happened) would be a nice candlelit dinner in the woods. Somewhere outside with nothing but the stars and the sound of nature. I can picture it; a nice modern cabin in the woods with a huge balcony and a great view. People think it's all about the money and going somewhere extravagant, but I enjoy the simplicity of just being alone with my date and not a soul around. That's how you get to know someone without all the filters they present. Then maybe something posh and extravagant later would be nice.

Describe yourself using 3 adjectives. Ambitious, loving and creative.

Any pet peeves? I have a few pet peeves. I guess my biggest one is when someone tells you they will do something, and they don't follow through. Keeping your word is big in my book. Having integrity is priceless.

Where is your favorite vacation destination and why? My favorite vacation spot would be France. I will forever love that place. My focus was to learn more about "Marie Antoinette" since I was named after her. I've been to 5 countries so far, and France by far is my favorite. I would love to go to Italy after the pandemic. That's my next destination.

Congrats on your Playboy feature! What does this mean to you? There are no words... I'm simultaneously speechless and honored to be featured. There are a few of my family members going through some health issues, and I know were not promised tomorrow. Life is so precious, and time is that one thing you can't get back. I know being featured in Playboy would make my mom so proud. She has always said to me, "before my time is up I would love to see you shine". Needless to say, being featured in Playboy is my time to shine. I'm so incredibly gracious for the opportunity. Over the years, my family have seen how hard I've worked since I left Kansas and moved to California. It's been a struggle to get that break, and I've always wanted to be featured in Playboy. My mom always told me how beautiful I was inside and out, and how the human body should be admired and celebrated (as if you're looking at a Michaelangelo painting). I feel Playboy has done that so well for decades. My mom always wanted me to have that moment that allowed me to embrace my femininity. I won't go on too much about the back story, but I know just taking this step was huge for me. I think this will open some lucrative opportunities for not only me, but those who've supported me as well. I've always been so conservative and had to step out of my shell a bit. Embracing everything about yourself is liberating.

What do you think of when it comes to Playboy and the iconic bunny? Playboy is iconic in my opinion because Hefner was able to glorify the "girl next door" or "the powerful woman in the office". He did it in a way where these women were not only sexy but respected because of their education and career goals. I really respected his overall vision. I don't think he ever wanted women to be objectified and judged. He always wanted to keep it classy and inspirational to the masses.

What is your biggest challenge as a model so far? Learning to say "No" when certain projects don't benefit me or that are not in alignment with my brand. I do a lot of promotional modeling, which I enjoy, but I'm very picky on what I promote. I get the most compliments on my face and skin, but that doesn't mean all cosmetics and skincare products are great for me to promote.

If you could change any one thing in the world, what would it be and why? Wow, that's a good question. If I could change one thing it would be racism. How would this world look without racism? As a woman of color, that's one dream I have. Maybe the next generation will be different. There's something to be said when someone can look at your as their equal and not feel judged based on your skin color, gender or religious beliefs. The key is educating the next generation against racism. It could happen.

"I can sit on the beach all day and enjoy the sound of the water. That is my go-to place to meditate when I need a break."

What inspires you? What inspires me are people who persevere through adversity, watching young kids become scientists, doctors, programmers and entrepreneurs, people who give back and donate their time (which I do a lot), and good teachers who still teach despite the low wages they earn. True leaders that get up every day and make a difference in their community inspire me. I honestly believe with all the technological and scientific advancements in this time, there will be a cure for cancer one day.

Where do you see yourself 10 years from now? In ten years I see myself more political, having my own nonprofit, hopefully, have a few books published, and traveling the world as an Influential Speaker or Life Coach, because I love to inspire people. If I keep focused on my goals, by that time I will have my dream house in the woods or a beautiful oasis somewhere.

You Don't Know KING NOIRE

BY **ANITA LITTLE**

From quarantine, the renowned adult star opens up to Playboy about fatherhood, black joy and the responsibility of being an artist

When I call Hasan Salaam, he's quarantining at his home in Tampa, Florida. I hear dishes clattering and a child cooing in the background.

The 39-year-old is confident but ruminative, always allowing some silence to pass before he responds to a question. Salaam has been on the move—touring in some form—for more than 15 years. Now during the pandemic, he's been forced to pause for the first time in quite a while, and he's basking in the stillness. Besides, he has an all-consuming reason to be home irrespective of a pandemic that's showing no signs of abating: a bouncy, bubbly two-year-old son named Majesty.

"Not being able to go shoot or see clients all over the world is semi-frustrating. But at the same time, I got this one opportunity to watch my son grow up," Salaam says. "I get to see all these little things he's picking up. He's doing colors and shapes and letters and numbers, and I get to watch all of that every day."

Salaam's quarantine-era fatherhood goes as one might expect. He spends the day changing diapers, cooking meals for his family and going on walks with his son. When he has a bit of downtime, he works on his rap music, plays football and responds to the daily inundation of messages on his OnlyFans account.

Salaam's alter ego—what most of his followers know him by is King Noire, and he's one of the most well-known male entertainers in the adult industry.

His beginnings were humble enough. At 18, he was kicked out of his home. Unmoored, he bounced from couch to couch until a female friend asked him to appear in an adult magazine with her. His interest was piqued, and the rest is history.

"People said I was good at it," he says. "So I picked it up. It just kind of happened more than it was completely planned out."

From there King Noire started doing private cuckolding gigs, BDSM sessions and other adult work. Being on the East Coast limited his studio opportunities since the region wasn't a hub of the porn industry at the time, so he left to teach creative writing at a public school in his home state of New Jersey while doing community organizing with social justice nonprofits. He missed adult work, though, and also recognized an opportunity to create a change that he had yet to see in the adult world: the representation of black men.

"I noticed that, especially within the black community, there weren't a lot of performers that were a full person," he says. "So I decided if I'm going to do this again, I'm going to give you all of me. I'm not just a dick and some floggers. I'm also going to talk about justice, equal rights, music, my family, cooking. I'm going to talk about all these things I enjoy, and give you an entire person."

King Noire recounts some incidents when he encountered racism and bigotry on major sets, including being asked to play a thug, a janitor or a prison inmate. When he called out these roles as racially offensive, the studios simply didn't book him again. With the heightened attention being paid to the Black Lives Matter movement after the extrajudicial killings of countless black Americans such as George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, many industries are facing internal reckonings over how they treat their black workers. The adult industry isn't exempt

"I've been on set and called a nigger by another performer. The company, along with the agency I was working with, was like, 'Yeah, that's fine. Just keep working,'" he says. "I refused, and it became a whole thing. There is a problem in the industry, and it needs to be spoken about. I come from a place where you either speak on it or you ain't shit. You shouldn't show your face if you don't stand up for your people."

How black men are portrayed in the adult industry doesn't veer too far from how they're perceived in

> **"There is a problem in the industry, and it needs to be spoken about. I come from a place where you either speak on it or you ain't shit."**

> **Some people come into this profession and burn out really quick because they think, I'm going to bust it open and I'll be rich tomorrow. That's not how it works.**

society. The term "black buck" emerged in the post-Reconstruction United States and was used to paint black men as savage and brutish. The idea of black men as more aggressive, as sexually insatiable, has persisted to this day. You see it in the oversexed and one-dimensional depictions of black masculinity in porn. A search of "BBC" on adult sites or a visit to Blacked.com proves this. When it comes to how black bodies are seen in porn, the industry suffers from a severe lack of imagination and instead reinforces tired tropes.

"We're always told as black people that our sex is supposed to look a certain way," Salaam says. "We're supposed to be, as black men, the stud, or, as black women, the dominatrix. We're not allowed to have a softer side or a romantic, passionate, sensual side."

He decided that instead of depending on the often racist and problematic porn studio ecosystem, he would build his own brand. He wanted to show the full range of black people and give black pleasure the nuance it deserves.

And he would do it with Jasmine Johnson (professionally known as Jet Setting Jasmine), a fellow adult performer he fell in love with after they joined forces as business partners performing at sex parties in New York. Johnson is also the mother of his two-year-old, and they co-parent their two teenage daughters, Mani and Star, as well. Salaam and Johnson started Royal Fetish Films, an award-winning independent porn studio that aims to bring more inclusive porn to an industry that too often traffics in stereotypes.

"Our clientele was mostly black women between the age of 25 and 45," Salaam says. "So many of them would ask, 'Where is good black porn? Where can I find black porn where we're not being called names or where people are actually lotioned up before they get on set? Where's the passion, the romance or the kinkiness? So we decided: Let's shoot something on our own."

In addition to producing original adult content, the duo did pre-pandemic live shows as part of a nationwide tour and will soon debut the third season of Royal Fetish Radio, a podcast where they tackle everything from polyamory to porn and parenting. Last year, Salaam also released The Royal Fetish Experience, a provocative rap album that details moments in BDSM and kink.

Within their Royal Fetish empire, Salaam and Johnson paint a compelling portrait that we rarely get to see in media, adult or not: a rich and layered representation of black love. The art they create together is a welcome refuge from an adult landscape that is mostly barren of honest depictions of black sexuality. There's frequently no allowance for the range of thought and feeling black people experience in their bedroom lives. Salaam sees sex as "the ultimate form of creation," and it's his mission to show it unapologetically.

"It's a way of communicating without speaking, to truly learn someone's body language, to be inside another person, to have another person inside you," he says. "However you get down, it is a connection beyond just conversation."

What Salaam knows intimately but what many refuse to acknowledge is that the adult industry is like any other industry: You have to work extremely hard to build a following and be self-sufficient. And he's had to do that against a societal backdrop that stigmatizes both sex workers and black men.

"As soon as I wake up in the morning, I'm responding to emails, I'm posting, I'm doing all these things to keep my business alive. It's a nonstop thing," he says. "I think some people come into this profession and burn out really quick because they think, I'm going to bust it open and I'll be rich tomorrow. That's not how it works. This shit is tireless."

To see King Noire is to recognize him in all of his nuance and complexity: as a father, a life partner, a businessman, an artist and, yes, an adult performer. Hopefully, the seismic societal shift currently happening will force more people to see black men and adult stars—the fraught intersection King Noire must navigate to survive and thrive—through a more humanized lens. Until that happens, he'll stay focused on protecting his art, his family and his community.

"I was told very young by my moms: If you're not doing shit for your people, no matter what it is you're doing, then you're wasting your time."

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